

TIME

In Trouble.



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CONTENTS

9

The Brief

27

The View

34

Trump Stumped

His once commanding lead having departed with Joe Biden, the Republican nominee is scrambling for a winning approach against Kamala Harris

By Brian Bennett and Eric Cortellessa

40

High and Dry

Amid an epic drought, a proposed new compact on the Colorado River may finally send the Navajo Nation the water it was always due but has never received

By Elliot Ross

71

Time Off

52

The Grifter Era

Fraud, scams, and confidence games are everywhere these days, but enforcement is not. And it's getting worse

By Alana Semuels

59

Latino Leaders

TIME's annual list recognizes 17 people showing the way forward through innovation, representation, storytelling, and authentic connection

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The San Juan River, a tributary of the Colorado, at the northern border of the Navajo Nation

Photograph by Elliot Ross for TIME

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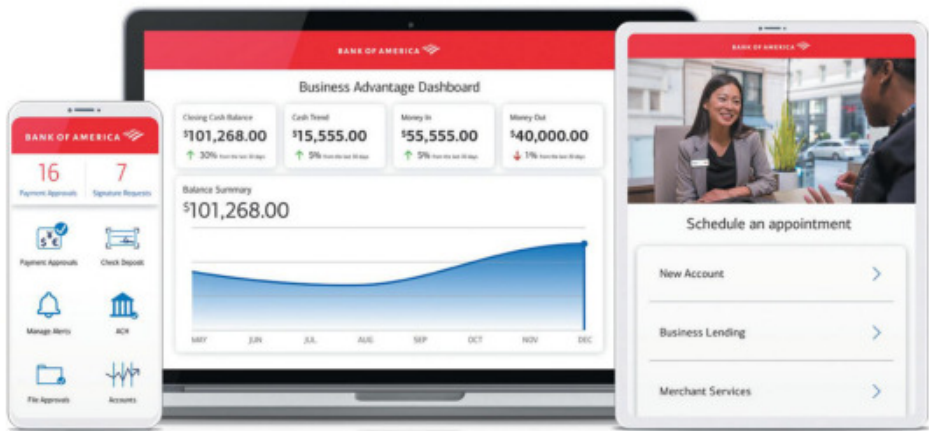
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Realizing he's afraid of heights.

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Getting ready to vote



The work of encouraging trust in our democratic process ultimately comes down to each of us

WHILE MANY AMERICANS MAY HAVE NOV. 5, Election Day, circled on their calendars, the presidential election is already well under way. In-person voting has started in Pennsylvania, perhaps this year's most-contested state. It will begin this month in four others, ranging from Minnesota to Vermont. Absentee ballots for military and overseas voters are required to be mailed out by Sept. 21. In truth, "Election Day" is now months long.

But, though the past three elections witnessed historically high turnout, polls still show widespread unease among Americans about the integrity of our election system. Satisfaction with how democracy works in the U.S. is at an all-time low. Unease has spread among Americans about the durability of democracy, a sentiment that crosses party lines and chips at the foundation of what many believe makes America an example to the world.

Former President Donald Trump has been the loudest voice questioning the integrity of our vote, including doing so in TIME's interview with the candidate in April—but the fears of many voters go beyond any single candidate. Social media silos are deepening. The spread of artificial intelligence makes it ever easier for foreign misinformation campaigns to spread. Local news deserts widen, harming our ability to find trusted information about candidates as well as providing voters with reliable guidance on the nuts and bolts of our elections.

From left: Lucille Wenegeime, Cisco Aguilar, Steve Ballmer, Meagan Wolfe, and Stephen Richer

TO DO OUR PART to encourage civic participation, we are launching a new initiative called TIME Votes. This fall, TIME's reporters and editors will be publishing a series of articles explaining how America's electoral process works and how readers can best

participate in it. These stories will provide basic information about voting and the differences across each state. We'll be publishing guidance meant to help readers become more informed observers of the political process on topics like fundraising and polling. At the same time, our political reporters will be traveling the country with the candidates and speaking to voters to best understand the issues that will determine their votes.

We also know that the work of encouraging civic participation and trust in our democratic process ultimately comes down to each of us, so we are launching our Democracy Defenders initiative, shining a spotlight on leaders who are working to boost voter participation, reverse disenfranchisement, and combat misinformation. This includes election administrators like Wisconsin's Meagan Wolfe, who encourages those concerned about the integrity of the vote to become poll workers themselves. "Actually going to see it for themselves does give them a lot more confidence," she says. At Headcount, Lucille Wenegeime has her sights set on registering 520,000 young voters at venues like concerts and Major League Baseball games. Ben Nimmo is a threat intelligence investigator at OpenAI (a TIME licensing and technology partner), where he exposes covert influence operations. Together they join other inspiring state, corporate, and nonprofit leaders who are stepping up to defend our democratic process.

This is the 26th presidential election during which readers have turned to TIME. We thank you for your trust and hope to continue to live up to it.

Sam Jacobs,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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Heritage List in 2010

**At-Turaif,
UNESCO World Heritage Site**
The birthplace of the Kingdom
A 300-year-old legacy



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Leaders

TIME hosted its inaugural TIME100 Women's Leadership Forum on Sept. 10 in Manhattan, featuring panels on leadership, sports, health care equity, and voting. Left, Brooke Shields; right, Olympic gymnast Aly Raisman; top, TIME editor-in-chief Sam Jacobs interviews (from left) actor Kerry Washington, organizer Angela Lang, activist Maria Teresa Kumar, and attorney Sherrilyn Ifill. All coverage at time.com/leadership-forum



Protecting the vote

As part of TIME's Democracy Defenders project, *The Officials*, a new documentary short directed and produced by Sara Archambault and Margo Guernsey, profiles U.S. election officials in four battleground states as they prepare for Election Day. Watch at time.com/the-officials

On the covers



Illustration by
Tim O'Brien for TIME



Photograph by
Elliot Ross for TIME

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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

In the TIME100 AI (Sept. 16) we misstated when AMD's MI300 chips launched; it was December 2023. We also misstated the investment budget of the PIF's new fund; it is \$100 billion.

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The Brief

THE LONG WAIT

BY NIK POPLI

Judge Juan Merchan's
postponement of Donald
Trump's sentencing keeps the
nation on hold too



INSIDE

THE CITIES MAKING STRIDES IN
CUTTING CARBON EMISSIONS

TIME AND STATISTA RANK THE
WORLD'S BEST COMPANIES

THE MOSQUITO PROBLEM MIGHT
BE GETTING WORSE

PHOTOGRAPH BY AHMED GABER

WHEN DONALD TRUMP IN MAY BECAME THE first former President ever to be criminally convicted, one question was answered and a whole new set arose. Perhaps most important: Would Americans vote this fall with the Republican presidential nominee behind bars?

The answer turns out to be no, but only because his sentencing is being postponed. Judge Juan Merchan, who oversaw Trump's criminal case in Manhattan over falsifying business records, said on Sept. 6 that he will announce the sentence on Nov. 26, to avoid any question of interfering with the election. Trump was supposed to learn his fate on Sept. 18, about seven weeks before Election Day.

Trump faces up to four years in prison after a 12-member jury in Manhattan unanimously pronounced him guilty of 34 felony charges—though he could receive a lighter sentence or probation as a first-time offender. The conviction stemmed from his involvement in a scheme to cover up a \$130,000 payment to former adult-film star Stormy Daniels just before the 2016 presidential election, “hush money” meant to prevent her from affecting the outcome of that ballot by publicly discussing an alleged sexual encounter with Trump. The jury found that Trump falsified business records to disguise the nature of the reimbursement.

Trump's team had requested a delay in the sentencing, and it was granted without objection from the Manhattan district attorney's office. The defense argued that an early sentencing could unduly affect voters' perceptions, and framed the delay as a necessary measure to preserve the integrity of the election process. Merchan acknowledged the political sensitivity of the timing: “Adjourning decision on the motion and sentencing, if such is required, should dispel any suggestion that the Court will have issued any decision or imposed sentence either to give an advantage to, or to create a disadvantage for, any political party and or any candidate for any office.”

With sentencing delayed until after the election, Trump's lawyers will have extra time to try to overturn his conviction. It will also allow Trump to run his campaign for a second term without the possibility of doing so from prison, letting him focus on his campaign messaging without the immediate distraction of legal proceedings.

THROUGHOUT THE TRIAL, but especially in recent weeks, Judge Merchan found himself in unprecedented predicaments, at one point imposing a gag order barring

Trump from verbal attacks on witnesses. In his ruling, he said he was still striving to treat Trump as he would any other defendant despite the extraordinary nature of the case and its potential political ramifications. Trump's campaign seized on the judge's ruling postponing sentencing as evidence that the prosecution was politically motivated. The candidate himself has repeatedly hurled insults at Merchan, whom he calls biased against him, and leveled personal attacks on the judge's daughter, a Democratic political consultant.

Indeed, Trump's political fortunes surged last year as his indictment (first by the Manhattan prosecutor, a Democrat, and eventually, on a total of 88 counts in four jurisdictions) nourished a fresh narrative of politically motivated persecution that resonated with his base. In a statement posted to social media, Trump wrote, “The

Manhattan D.A. Witch Hunt has been postponed because everyone realizes that there was NO CASE, I DID NOTHING WRONG!” Trump has claimed that the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling on presidential immunity, which granted broad protection to presidential conduct, could affect his New York State case and may provide grounds to overturn the conviction. However, prosecutors have argued that the Supreme Court's ruling on immunity had “no bearing” on a state case related to a sex-scandal cover-up before he was elected President. “The evidence that he claims is affected by the Supreme Court's ruling constitutes only a sliver of the mountains of testimony and documentary proof that the jury considered in finding him guilty,” the prosecutors wrote.

Merchan is set to deliver his decision on the immunity request on Sept. 16—just two days before sentencing had been scheduled to happen.

Delays have become a fixture in all of Trump's criminal cases since he was indicted four times in 2023, with legal battles in New York, Florida, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. The Florida case, involving classified documents, was dismissed by a judge in July, although the special counsel is appealing that ruling. Meanwhile, the two Jan. 6–related cases remain unresolved and are unlikely to progress before the election.

The New York case, which was the only one to go to trial this year, concluded with Trump's guilty verdict in May. Now, Trump will sidestep the potential disruption of a courtroom spectacle during the final stages of his campaign—as voters are left to answer the one question Trump likely cares about the most. □

**‘This matter
is one that
stands alone,
in a unique
place in this
Nation’s
history.’**

—JUDGE JUAN MERCHAN,
ON HIS DECISION TO DELAY TRUMP'S SENTENCING



Swimming for gold

Chinese athlete Guo Jincheng dives into the pool for a warm-up before competing in the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris on Sept. 3. Guo won six medals (four gold, two silver) and set two world records at the Games, where 4,400 athletes in 22 sports competed in 549 medal events over 12 days.

THE BULLETIN

India's Supreme Court orders striking doctors to return to work

INDIA'S HIGHEST COURT INSTRUCTED striking junior doctors to return to work in a Sept. 9 order, after weeks of protests that followed the rape and murder of a trainee medic in Kolkata. Some doctors in the state vowed to continue pressing their demands as the protests spread beyond India's borders after the order. Thousands of diaspora Indians protested on Sept. 10 in 130 cities across 25 countries, including the U.S., to demand justice, organizers told Reuters.

DOCTOR'S MURDER The victim was a 31-year-old trainee doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College, a government-run hospital. Her severely injured body was discovered by colleagues the morning of Aug. 9 after she reportedly fell asleep in a seminar room during a 36-hour

shift. A man was arrested for the crime on Aug 10 and a Kolkata court rejected his request for bail on Sept. 6.

TOLL ON HOSPITALS The walkouts have put a strain on the country's health care system, particularly in the state of West Bengal. Kapil Sibal, the lawyer representing the state before the Supreme Court, claimed that at least 23 patients had died as a result of the doctors' strike. The junior doctors say that they have taken necessary precautions to prevent harm from coming to patients, including creating a new telemedicine service that launched Aug. 31.

SAFETY FOR MEDICS A survey conducted in 2015 by the Indian Medical Association found that 75% of doctors experienced violence on the job. The

West Bengal Junior Doctor's Front, which spearheaded the strike effort in the region, said on Sept. 10 that the government had failed to provide doctors with safe working conditions, and vowed to continue striking despite the Supreme Court's order until their demands for justice and better hospital security were met.

Dr. Arimpa Saha, a Calcutta National Medical College junior doctor on strike, told TIME that she was disheartened by the court's focus on the doctors' return to work, as opposed to justice for the victim. She said in a WhatsApp message that she believed there had been little discussion in the Sept. 9 hearing about "30 days of injustice" since the murder, which she said was the reason so many doctors had taken to the streets. —ANNA GORDON

ELECTIONS

Meet the Democracy Defenders

In the minds of many voters, nothing less than American democracy is on the line in 2024. Some see threats on multiple fronts: foreign interference, artificial intelligence, a polarized electorate. Others are most worried about candidates who have undermined faith in our voting systems. The 11 people on this list—Democrats and Republicans, public officials and private individuals, business leaders and civil rights crusaders—are working to boost voter participation, reverse disenfranchisement, and combat misinformation. Their efforts help not only defend democracy, but also strengthen it.

Read more at time.com/democracy-defenders

Lucille Wenegieme

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HEADCOUNT

Lucille Wenegieme sees her job as a straightforward one: “We turn music fans into voters.”

That’s the mission statement of Headcount, which leverages the fan bases of some of the world’s biggest artists to get out the vote. In two decades, Headcount has grown from a small, grassroots initiative, best known for working with jam bands like the Grateful Dead, to a national outfit that regularly hosts voter-registration booths on the hottest tours, including those of Olivia Rodrigo, Ariana Grande, Beyoncé, and Green Day.

Over the years, Headcount has helped register over 1 million voters. The group’s research finds that outreach has had a clear impact—78% of the young people Headcount engaged with in 2020 ended up voting in the election, Wenegieme says. “You’ll always for the rest of your life, no matter what election you vote in, remember that you got registered at this really great festival with your friends,” she says. “That creates a core memory that we know sticks with people.”

Wenegieme didn’t always see herself in a job so focused on voting. “I grew up in Colorado, and nobody I knew had been involved in politics or campaigns,” she says. After a stint working in the fashion industry, she shifted toward civic engagement—eventually working for the National Vote at Home Institute and the Denver clerk and recorder’s office. Though the transition meant a big learning curve, all of her work has involved young people and how they



‘THE PRIORITY

IS GETTING AS

MANY YOUNG

PEOPLE AS

POSSIBLE

REGISTERED.’

—Lucille Wenegieme,
Headcount

communicate. “I’ve always tried to be that person that’s thinking, How does this messaging [fit with] how people actually talk?”

She took over as Headcount’s executive director last year as it was working to expand its reach beyond music. Headcount now partners with Major League Baseball to register fans at ballparks. The group has also launched contests with brands like American Eagle and influencer Brittany Broski. When entering, fans are asked to check their voter-registration status via Headcount’s website.

In 2024, Wenegieme has an ambitious goal of registering 520,000 voters before Election Day. “The priority is getting as many young people as possible registered, and then getting them to vote,” she says. “That’s always our North Star.” —SIMMONE SHAH

8 others bolstering democracy

From running elections to debunking conspiracy theories, the people here are shoring up democratic norms

Cisco Aguilar

NEVADA SECRETARY OF STATE

In a purple state that could prove pivotal in 2024, Aguilar, a Democrat, has worked to increase trust in the voting process, with a focus on protecting election workers, whom he calls the “**unsung heroes of our democracy.**”

Steve Ballmer

USAFacts, FOUNDER

The former Microsoft CEO now runs a nonpartisan website that makes public data accessible on everything from border crossings to how tax dollars are spent. The goal, he says, is to help voters “**engage in proper debate grounded in what’s going on.**”

Ken Block

FORMER TRUMP CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT

After getting hired by the Trump 2020 campaign to track down significant voter fraud and finding none, Block wrote a book about how Joe Biden’s win was legitimate. This year, he fears the role “**partisan election officials might play in altering the outcome of an election.**”

Courtland Cox

CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Sixty years after he registered Black voters as part of the famed Freedom Summer project in Mississippi, Cox, 83, is working with the NAACP to mobilize volunteers to get out the Black vote. “**This is not about ‘We did this in 1960 and therefore everything will be all right.’ No, every day, it’s a battle.**”

Lauren Kunis

VOTERIDERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As most states now have voter-ID laws, Kunis’ nonpartisan group helps eligible voters obtain state identification and navigate other rules to cast a ballot. “**We’re in a place of really unprecedented challenge when it comes to voting rights and voting access.**”

Chad Lorenz

VOTE BEAT, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Lorenz leads a nonprofit newsroom that covers elections and voting at the local and national levels, and has published stories that **helped debunk conspiracy theories and spurred changes in policies.**

Stephen Richer

MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA, RECORDER

Few Republicans have stood up to misinformation in their party as defiantly as Richer, who oversees elections in the state’s largest county but will step down in January after losing to a primary challenger who cast doubt on recent election outcomes. “**I personally went through some pretty low times. But it was very meaningful.**”

Janice Winfrey

CITY CLERK, DETROIT

Winfrey has overseen the Michigan city’s elections for nearly two decades, and is still at it despite drawing threats of violence after 2020. “**I know God is keeping and protecting me, and I have to rely on that.**”

Ben Nimmo

PRINCIPAL THREAT INTELLIGENCE INVESTIGATOR, OPENAI

When Ben Nimmo first began tracking online influence operations targeting elections in 2014, he had to scroll for hours on Twitter, studying how networks of fake accounts tried to hijack partisan narratives.

A decade later, AI is changing the game—not just for foreign threat actors, but for those working to counter them. “So much of the conversation is around how the bad guys might use AI,” says Nimmo, who now works as the principal threat intelligence investigator at OpenAI (a TIME licensing and technology partner). “My all-time favorite misquote from Harry Potter is: We can use magic too.”

Nimmo leads a team that seeks to identify foreign and domestic bad actors who use ChatGPT and other OpenAI tools to carry out covert influence operations. But he says OpenAI’s own tools also give his team unprecedented visibility into large or suspicious patterns of activity. “You feed it to the model, and it comes back with an answer in a couple of minutes,” he says. “The speed



With reporting by Vera Bergengruen, Philip Elliott, Lottie Joiner, Chantelle Lee, Sanya Mansoor, and Nik Popli

with which we can investigate and analyze this stuff is orders of magnitude faster.”

In May, OpenAI announced it had removed five covert influence operations, detected by Nimmo’s team, based in Russia, China, Iran, and Israel. All were trying to use the company’s AI tools to manipulate public opinion.

A big lesson from 2016, when Russia mounted a vast operation to meddle in the U.S. presidential election, was that influence operations were “a bit like mold in the bathroom,” says Nimmo. “They thrive in the dark, and they thrive when nobody is looking to wipe them up.” Now, bad actors seeking to influence elections may be using different tactics, he says. “Operators seem like they’re deliberately trying to get caught, in order to sow fear about the potential of thousands or millions of others like them stoking chaos,” he says, even though most of these operations gain barely any traction on their own.

‘TAKE A DEEP

BREATH AND STAY

ALERT, BUT ABOVE

ALL, STAY CALM.’

—Ben Nimmo, OpenAI

The goal, experts say, is to make people distrust all information. “Take a deep breath and stay alert, but above all, stay calm,” advises Nimmo. “Yes, it’s gonna be a busy year. Just keep focusing on the evidence and asking the question, Did it actually go anywhere?”

—VERA BERGENGRUEN



Meagan Wolfe

**WISCONSIN ELECTIONS
ADMINISTRATOR**

Over the past four years, Meagan Wolfe has seen a drastic and alarming change in the way Americans perceive the voting process. The administrator of the Wisconsin elections commission says she’s learned there are limits to what her nonpartisan agency can do to change the minds of those convinced that their votes aren’t being accurately counted.

“That was something that was really new to us as election officials,” says Wolfe, who has been overseeing Wisconsin’s elections since 2018. “No matter how many facts we presented or how transparent we are about our work, there’s still this misinformation that persists.”

In most states, the chief election official is a partisan position. Wisconsin is unusual in that Wolfe’s post is nonpartisan, something she says she takes very seriously in the face of conspiracy theories positing, without evidence, that Joe Biden won the battleground state in 2020 with her help. Wolfe says she and other election officials have been subjected to “four years of continuous attacks,” intimidation, and death threats.

She’s also withstood calls from powerful political figures for her to resign. “If we were to give in to those attempts to sway us, to intimidate us out of our roles, what type of message would that send?” she asks. “I just won’t be a part of that, part of allowing those attempts to sway how I operate.”

False claims about Wisconsin elections, even outlandish ones, can use up precious public resources, as local officials and part-time workers find themselves addressing a flood of calls, emails and public-record requests. Wolfe and her staff have tried to combat election misinformation by quickly setting the record straight. But Wolfe says she’s come to learn that sometimes “it’s best to recognize the noise for what it is, and recognize that just because there’s a loud voice repeating it doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s become mainstream.”

The most effective breakthroughs have come from voters who decide to become poll workers so they can root out the alleged misconduct, only to find none. “Not having to take someone else’s word for it, but actually going to see it for themselves does give them a lot more confidence,” she says. “I encourage others that have these concerns to do the same and to get involved.” —V.B.

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CONSTRUCTION

Decarbonizing cement

More than perhaps any other material, cement is the glue that holds the globalized world together—especially our cities. But producing it requires huge amounts of fossil fuels, and the industry is responsible for up to 8% of global greenhouse-gas emissions, according to a 2023 study in *Nature*.

Efforts to tackle the issue have historically centered on things like fuel and efficiency. But some companies have another option, which could be a win-win for the climate and the cement industry: creating carbon-negative building materials by storing excess carbon dioxide in concrete.

Paebbl captures carbon from the atmosphere and combines it with ground olivine rock to create a rock powder or slurry. That can be used as an inert industrial filler or ingredient in building materials like concrete. The process, known as accelerated mineralization, can be done within an hour and potentially bring the carbon footprint of concrete down by up to 70%, says Paebbl's co-CEO Andreas Saari. In nature, that process can take centuries.

"Not only are you storing carbon, but you are also substituting some of the [kiln-made] clinker which is the big carbon emitter in concrete," he says. "It doesn't require a high temperature to make; it gives off heat, which we can recapture and use as energy."

Paebbl produces 200 kg to 300 kg of product each day at its pilot plant in Rotterdam, where it is also building a demonstration plant. By 2030, it aims to have three commercial-scale plants operational across Europe and North America.

Other companies are storing carbon directly in concrete. CarbonCure injects carbon dioxide into fresh concrete during mixing. Once injected, the gas undergoes mineralization, permanently binding to the concrete. By using this form of concrete, companies can reduce their emissions by 3% to 5%. CarbonCure estimates it has saved around 450,000 metric tons of CO₂ to date.

One major roadblock in scaling up technologies like these is getting past prescriptive specifications in codes and regulations. Building codes are being updated to allow for newer forms of lower-emissions concrete. And in the U.S., the Federal Buy Clean Initiative has led to the specification of more than \$2 billion for the procurement of lower-carbon construction materials, including cement, for federally funded projects. And companies like Paebbl and CarbonCure also see an economic incentive for their technology by selling credits for the carbon stored in construction materials.

For now, it is "a bridge solution," Saari says. "We need to find a way to store billions of tons of CO₂. Where can we find a permanent home for that? Construction material is there." —Sarah Sax



ROADWAYS

Cutting traffic to fight emissions

BY MICHELINE MAYNARD

TOURISTS CONSIDER DUBLIN TO BE A LIVELY, LEGENDARY cultural hub. But for its residents and business owners, getting anywhere can be a challenge. "Traffic in Dublin is absolutely appalling," says Emma Gray, the co-founder of Gaillot et Gray, a café in one of the city's busiest areas.

Multiple studies rate Dublin's traffic as the second worst among major global cities, behind only London, whose population is nearly 20 times as great. Ireland's Department of Transport estimates that the economic cost of traffic jams in Dublin is likely to soar from €336 million (\$372 million) in 2022 to €1.5 billion (\$1.7 billion) by 2040.

In February, the city announced a plan that aims for a 40% reduction in overall traffic by 2028. In August, Dublin launched two primary traffic lanes to the city center, set up dedicated bus lanes, and established pedestrian-only streets and gathering spots in an effort to encourage more people to get around the city without using cars.

Dublin joined a flock of global cities that have banned or limited vehicle traffic on a regular basis. Amsterdam, Paris, Barcelona, Brussels, Helsinki, Copenhagen, and Birmingham, England, are among a growing list of places that are addressing congestion and encouraging motorists to walk, bike, and use transit.

A key goal is to reduce carbon dioxide and other emissions that pose a danger to people and the environment. Hundreds of cities and countries have joined a U.N.-led drive to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.



<
*A rare easy go on
Dublin's Dame Street*

In March, the Biden Administration announced new automobile-emissions standards pushing automakers to sell more electric and hybrid plug-in vehicles in the U.S. by 2032.

ACCORDING TO THE U.N., urban areas consume more than two-thirds of the world's energy and account for more than 70% of global carbon dioxide emissions. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has said that cities were "where the climate battle will largely be won or lost."

Paris, the site of a landmark conference in 2015 focused on the environment, says it has been making progress for years. In 2007, it adopted the Plan Climat, which in 11 years reduced its carbon footprint by 20%, and cut greenhouse gases by 25%. By 2050, the city aims to achieve zero emissions within its borders, and shrink its total carbon footprint by 80%.

Some of its steps include solar panels, and most noticeable by visitors, bike lanes across the city. Since 2001, bike thoroughfares have grown from 125 miles to more than 600 miles. At times, bikes outnumber motor vehicles and there are even bike jams at some busy intersections. For the Olympics, Paris added 34 miles of

new routes in just over two years.

In Amsterdam, where even the royal family uses bicycles, carbon-emissions levels have dropped by 30% since 2010, according to Rory van den Bergh, a spokesman for the city. Pollution levels are almost back to 1990 figures, and the city hopes to eliminate 95% of emissions by 2050.

Meanwhile, Copenhagen is aiming to become the world's first carbon-neutral city by next year, based on a four-part plan that includes energy consumption and production, mobility measures, and administrative steps. It reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by 80% from 2019 to 2022, by focusing on the city's heating and cooling network, which uses residual waste incineration to heat houses across the city. The climate plan aims for at least 75% of all trips to be by foot, bike, or public transport in 2025.

But business owners say environmental moves can constrict their ability to operate. In Dublin, Gray already sees an issue with the city's plan to set up the riverside corridors, one of which is near her café. Currently, it does not provide for loading zones, something she pointed out in a response to the upcoming regulations.

"Without a place for our deliveries to stop, this could be a major problem for us," she says. For instance, a nearby family business that specializes in glazing and glass cutting won't be able to function without regular deliveries of plate glass. "The fear is that without consideration to local business, we will all just move out of the city," Gray says.

That's a crucial consideration: small and medium-size businesses account for more than 90% of businesses worldwide and employ more than 50% of workers. In emerging economies, they provide up to 40% of GDP, according to the World Bank.

Still, there's a sense that despite the obstacles, change is inevitable. "More bikes and spaces for cyclists, and more green space and less cars are the way forward," Gray says. □

TRANSPORT

Embracing micromobility

More than half of all car trips in the U.S. are less than 3 miles, and the maximum distance most people will walk to get to public transit is around ¼ mile. If some of these journeys could be substituted with lower-emitting forms of transport like shared scooters, bikes, or ride-sharing, it could help cities lower their carbon emissions, says Colin Murphy of the nonprofit Shared-Use Mobility Center.

According to the North American Bikeshare and Scootershare Association, shared micromobility offset about 74 million lb. of CO₂ emissions by replacing auto trips across North America in 2022. Bird, an e-scooter ride-sharing company operating in more than 400 U.S. cities, including Oswego, N.Y., estimates using e-scooters there instead of more polluting transport could remove 56 tons of CO₂ annually.

Ride-sharing offers an option for those unable to use scooters or bikes because of disability, age, or distance. Via partnered with Jersey City, N.J., to create an on-demand app-based public ride-share service, charging \$2 per ride. Via estimates almost 6 million miles of driving have been avoided since 2020.

In Lake Tahoe, where cars are heavily used, the League to Save Lake Tahoe has helped bring in ride-sharing, bikes, and e-scooters. In 2020, more than 60,000 people took over 200,000 rides on e-scooters alone, saving around 186,000 vehicle miles traveled. —S.S.

How TIME ranked the World's Best Companies

BY ALANA SEMUELS

THERE WAS A MOMENT, IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE pandemic, when employers cared deeply about keeping workers happy. That moment passed for many companies, once quarantine ebbed and pressures from investors made them refocus on their bottom lines. But companies like Apple, Microsoft, and BMW still appear to be investing in their workers' happiness, a trait that has put them at the top of the list of a new statistical ranking of 1,000 of the World's Best Companies by Statista and TIME. The ranking is based on a formula of employee-satisfaction surveys; revenue growth; and environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) data.


Microsoft, for instance, which came in third in the rankings, was the second highest-rated company in employee satisfaction, after Alphabet, the parent company of Google. Microsoft has said it tries to ensure that employees are thriving, which it defines as “energized and empowered to do meaningful work,” an approach that seems to be working both at keeping employees happy and at powering revenue. The company made \$88 billion in its latest fiscal year, up 22% from the prior year, and ranked highly in revenue growth.

Apple also earned strong marks from employees, coming in fourth in employee satisfaction, but was propelled to the top of the rankings by its ESG rating, which was first out of all the companies. The tech giant has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030 and is making more products with recycled materials; in early 2024, it also became the first big tech company to achieve gender equality on its board of directors, now composed of four men and four women.

No one sector dominated. Though tech companies accounted for six of the top 20 positions and four of the top 10, a German automaker, BMW Group, ranked fourth. And Accenture, the consulting firm based in Dublin, finished second overall by scoring well in all three categories. Its CEO, Julie Sweet, was on the TIME100 list for 2024. Under her, Accenture “had a deeply positive societal impact, using technology to solve pressing issues,” Klaus Schwab, the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, wrote about Sweet.

Many of the top companies have made similar positive societal impacts while making money and keeping their employees happy at the same time. It's not necessarily something that their investors are clamoring for; that they do it anyway is what sets them apart.

See the full list at time.com/worlds-best-companies



Apple took the top spot from Microsoft in 2024, improving in sustainability

INDITEX

The parent of fashion giant Zara significantly boosted employee satisfaction



GM has focused on reducing emissions throughout its supply chain

TIME TOP 20 WORLD'S BEST COMPANIES						
RANK	COMPANY NAME	HEADQUARTERS	OVERALL SCORE	SUSTAINABILITY TRANSPARENCY RANK	EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION RANK	INDUSTRY
1	Apple	U.S.	97.75	1	4	IT, Electronics, Hardware & Equipment
2	Accenture	Ireland	97.70	4	21	Professional Services
3	Microsoft	U.S.	97.65	112	2	IT, Electronics, Hardware & Equipment
4	BMW Group	Germany	97.41	172	7	Automotive Industry & Suppliers
5	Amazon	U.S.	96.47	301	3	Technology, Media, & Services
6	Électricité de France	France	96.22	181	27	Utilities
7	American Express	U.S.	96.08	78	26	Banking & Financial Services
8	Meta Platforms	U.S.	96.04	65	8	Technology, Media, & Services
9	Siemens	Germany	95.96	41	10	Conglomerate
10	JPMorgan Chase	U.S.	95.93	148	18	Banking & Financial Services
11	Booking Holdings	U.S.	95.83	13	180	Hospitality, Travel & Leisure
12	Inditex	Spain	95.51	6	81	Retail, Wholesale, & Consumer Goods
13	L'Oréal	France	95.49	9	59	Retail, Wholesale, & Consumer Goods
14	Oracle	U.S.	95.35	53	33	Technology, Media, & Services
15	General Motors	U.S.	95.33	147	66	Automotive Industry & Suppliers
16	Ford	U.S.	95.10	205	36	Automotive Industry & Suppliers
17	Cardinal Health	U.S.	94.99	32	230	Chemicals, Drugs, & Biotechnology
18	Lululemon Athletica	Canada	94.98	10	190	Apparel, Footwear, & Sporting Goods
19	Cisco Systems	U.S.	94.97	68	15	Telecommunications Services
20	Nike	U.S.	94.85	60	19	Apparel, Footwear, & Sporting Goods

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Jimmy **70th** *Russell*
ANNIVERSARY

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PLEADED

Hunter Biden, **guilty, to all federal charges in his tax-evasion case** on Sept. 5. The plea comes after the President's son was convicted on felony gun charges in June.

SEARCHED

The **homes of two officials close to New York City Mayor Eric Adams** on Sept. 4 by federal agents. Agents have also seized the phones of five senior Adams officials.

KILLED

U.S. citizen Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, 26, in the West Bank on Sept. 6. Witnesses said she had been participating in a protest against settlements in the West Bank when Israeli forces opened fire.

FLED

Venezuelan politician Edmundo González Urrutia, to Spain, on Sept. 8, six weeks after challenging autocrat Nicolás Maduro in an election experts say was rigged.

LANDED

Boeing's troubled Starliner spacecraft, on Sept. 6, without the two astronauts who'd first flown the spacecraft in June. They remained at the International Space Station for safety reasons.

**DIED**

James Earl Jones

A great actor, a great voice

BECAUSE EVERYBODY KNOWS WHO *STAR WARS*' DARTH VADER IS, nearly every mainstream news report of James Earl Jones' death must lead with that role. But Jones, who was born in Mississippi in 1931 and died on Sept. 9, did so much more—he *was* so much more. He worked so frequently—in movies, theater, and TV—that we can only believe he truly loved his craft.

Jones was nominated for an Oscar only once, for his starring role in Martin Ritt's 1970 boxing drama *The Great White Hope*. In 1969, for playing the same role on Broadway, he'd won his first Tony Award; another came in 1987, for his performance as Troy Maxson in August Wilson's *Fences*. Jones also won three Emmys and a Grammy, and in 2011, he at last received an honorary Oscar, a way of recognizing his expansive film achievements.

Though Jones was a contemporary of actors like Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte, his career didn't reach the same heights; for too long, America had room for only so many Black stars—a lack of imagination that is all of our loss. But Jones brought the deepest kind of pleasure to audiences. His sonorous baritone—which he'd cultivated as a young student seeking to control his stuttering—gave life to the dramatic complexity of Darth Vader, as well as to the paternal nobility of Mufasa in both movie versions of *The Lion King*.

How to choose a favorite among Jones' movie performances? Here are two possibilities: his turn as the waggish sanitation worker Roop, who woos Diahann Carroll in the 1974 *Claudine*, and his dual role as a scientist and a fever version of an African shaman in John Boorman's 1977 *Exorcist II: The Heretic*. Though people hooted at *The Heretic* upon its release, Jones is astonishing. Glowering from beneath a gonzo locust headdress, he not only holds your attention, he locks you in his dream. That's what a great actor can do, and sometimes it's everything. —STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

COMPLETED

Kate Middleton

Chemotherapy

Six months after announcing her cancer diagnosis, Kate Middleton, the Princess of Wales, shared her "relief" at completing her chemotherapy treatment in a social media post on Sept. 9.

"The last nine months have been incredibly tough for us as a family," Middleton said in the announcement, posted on X, with gauzy footage of her young family. "The cancer journey is complex, scary, and unpredictable for everyone, especially those closest to you."

The Princess was hospitalized for what Kensington Palace called "planned abdominal surgery" in January, and announced her diagnosis on March 22. The new update noted that her recovery is ongoing. "Doing what I can to stay cancer free is now my focus," she said. "Although I have finished chemotherapy, my path to healing and full recovery is long and I must continue to take each day as it comes."

—Rebecca Schneid



5 metrics you should know about your health

BY ANGELA HAUPT

IF YOU'RE ASKED TO SHARE a few fun facts about yourself, you're probably not going to rattle off your blood-pressure or cholesterol levels (even if your "good" cholesterol is, well, really good). But you should have a solid sense of what those numbers are, experts say.

Why? "That old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is absolutely correct," says Dr. Josh Septimus, an internal-medicine physician with Houston Methodist Hospital. A small number of conditions, including heart disease and metabolic disorders, cause an enormous amount of suffering. "If we can identify a few things that help us prevent those morbidities, it's very much worth your time."

You don't have to know everything. Experts widely pan full-body health scans, for example, that claim to catch early signs of problems like cancer. Septimus also steers patients away from the VO_2 max test, which measures aerobic fitness levels. "It's a huge ordeal," he says. "They put you on a treadmill and put a mask over you to measure how much oxygen and carbon you produce while exercising." While the results can benefit elite athletes, they're not necessary for the average person. Likewise, while it's certainly possible to track and analyze your health data via smartwatches, you're not necessarily going to gain much by doing so.

When Septimus' patients "get lost in some random number," or ask about a test with little return, he refocuses them "on the basics." Here's a look at the five metrics everyone should know about their own health.

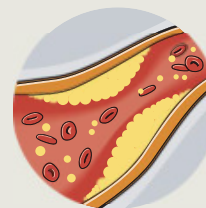


1. Waist circumference

Septimus likes to say that if he could use only one measurement to predict how much a person would suffer from medical problems, it would be waist circumference, which reveals the amount of fat around your middle section. If you have a waist size greater than 35 in. for women or 40 in. for men, your risk for heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and other metabolic problems increases. To figure out your waist circumference, stand up, exhale, and wrap a tape around your belly button. If your number is over the threshold, talk to your doctor about the healthiest way forward.

2. Cholesterol profile

You should always have a sense of your total cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, and—especially—low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol. The last one is "going to tell me about the patient's risk of developing coronary disease or atherosclerosis," also known as plaque-clogged arteries, says Dr. Sam Setareh, a cardiologist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He runs lipid panels on his patients at least annually. (Not every doctor does, so you may need to ask for a panel if it's been a while.)

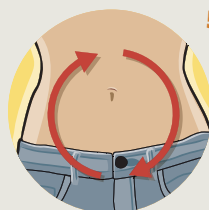


3. Blood pressure

If you have high blood pressure, your heart has to work harder to pump blood—which can damage the walls of the blood vessels, leading to atherosclerosis. Hypertension can trigger complications like heart attack and stroke, while hurting organs including your brain and kidneys. That's why it's so important to check your blood pressure at least once a year, and more often if you're at higher risk based on factors like age, family history, and obesity. "We have dozens of blood-pressure medications, many of which are cheap as dirt," Septimus says. "We can use them safely to reduce heart attack and stroke."

4. Blood sugar

Doctors can measure blood sugar a few ways, but most rely on a hemoglobin A1C test. "It's a little bit of a crude tool, and it doesn't tell the whole story, but it's usually the best number to go with," Septimus says. The test averages blood sugar over the past two to three months, and it's used to diagnose Type 2 diabetes and prediabetes. You should get your A1C tested annually if you're over 45, or if you're younger but are overweight or have risk factors like a sedentary lifestyle or a parent or sibling with diabetes. People with diabetes usually test at least twice a year.



5. Basal metabolic rate

Your BMR measures the minimum amount of energy your body needs to function at rest. "It's the fuel your body burns just to stay alive each day," says Dr. Farhan Malik, medical director at Atlanta Innovative Medicine. Knowing your BMR, he explains, allows you to determine if you're eating what you should to support your body's basic needs. That way, you can ensure changes to your diet and exercise routine are safe and sustainable. Use an online calculator to determine your BMR by plugging in your age, height, weight, and gender. Your number will help you know what your body really requires to thrive every day.

GOOD QUESTION

Are mosquitoes getting more dangerous?

BY ALICE PARK

MOSQUITOES SEEM TO BE EVERYWHERE THIS YEAR, AND they're not just a nuisance at outdoor gatherings. Health experts say they're carrying some serious diseases—a fact that's hitting home in the U.S., as some towns in Massachusetts have shut down public parks and other outdoor areas in the evenings, after mosquitoes in the region were learned to be carrying eastern equine encephalitis, a rare but deadly virus. And Dr. Anthony Fauci, the country's former top infectious-disease expert, was recently hospitalized with a West Nile virus infection he is believed to have acquired from a mosquito buzzing through his backyard.

It's not news that mosquitoes carry a number of viruses and parasites that can be harmful to human health, including malaria, dengue, yellow fever, chikungunya, West Nile virus, and eastern equine encephalitis. And it's understood that different species of mosquitoes are adept at spreading different viruses. But is this actually a particularly bad year for mosquito-borne diseases? And what can we expect in the future?

The variety primarily responsible for spreading eastern equine encephalitis, *Culiseta melanura*, has drawn the most attention lately because of how dangerous and potentially deadly the disease is. But fewer than a handful of cases have been reported so far this year in the U.S., which is pretty much on par with what's reported in New England every year, says Dr. James Shepherd, an infectious-disease expert at Yale University School of Medicine.

The more concerning type of mosquito is actually the most common, says Shepherd. *Aedes* mosquitoes, which include a variety of different species, cause most of the world's malaria, dengue, yellow fever, and Zika. They live primarily in urban, densely populated areas and can generate hundreds of eggs in as little as a cupful of water. With an estimated 80% of people around the world now living in urban settings, “we are concentrating ourselves in much, much denser communities amongst urban mosquitoes,” Shepherd says.

When it comes to West Nile virus, data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that 38 states have reported more than 370 cases so far in 2024; last year, more than 2,500 cases were recorded nationwide, nearly double the number reported in 2022. Experts note, however, that cases fluctuate depending on mosquito populations and the likelihood of human-mosquito interactions.

But in general, the risk of such infections is likely to rise, since mosquito populations are growing. “While it's true that so few mosquitoes are infected, the higher number of mosquitoes makes it more likely that such an encounter will happen,” says Dr. Photini Sinnis, professor and deputy director of the Malaria Research Institute at the



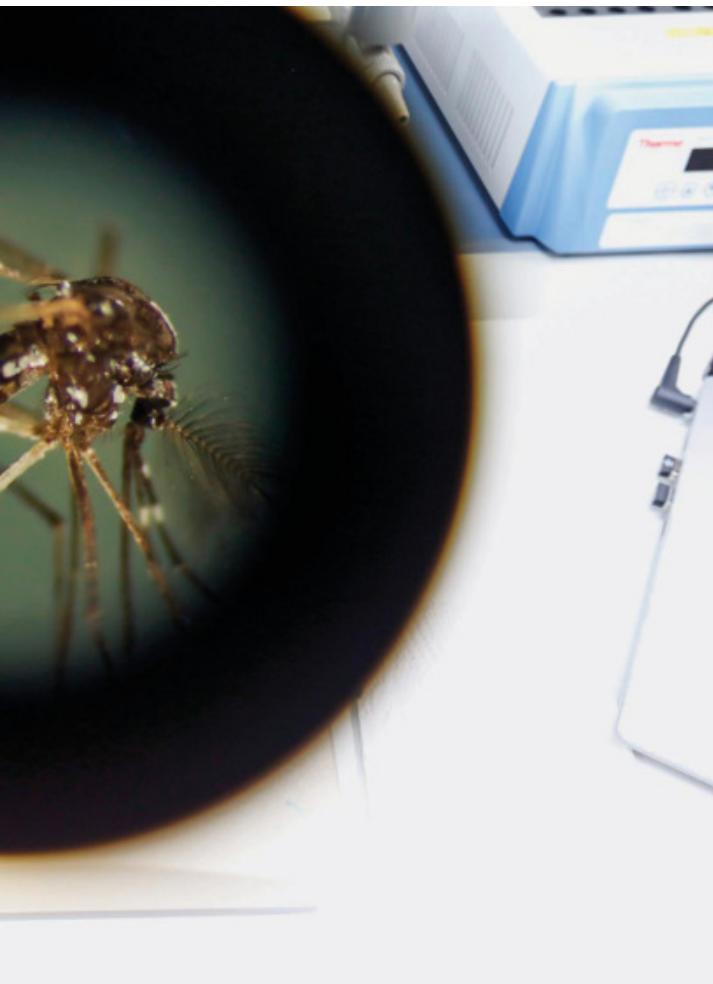
▲
Aedes
mosquitoes
cause most
of the world's
malaria, dengue,
yellow fever and
Zika cases

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

“Mosquito populations are really climate- and habitat-driven,” she says, and global warming is making it easier for mosquitoes to survive in more parts of the world—and for longer. The warmer planet also helps them to produce more generations of insects in a single season than ever before.

“With climate change, we see the [habitat] ranges for concerning species like *Aedes* spreading northward,” says Jonathan Oliver, associate professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota. “And all predictions indicate that they are going to spread throughout the Southeast and up the Eastern seaboard, and fairly high north in the Midwest. As mosquito species become established, people are potentially going to get exposed to a wide range of diseases they carry.”

TAKE DENGUE, Zika, chikungunya, and West Nile virus, for example. Shepherd says that in the past decade



or so, one of the species that can carry these diseases (*Aedes albopictus*) now breeds year-round in Connecticut. “We are going to see the march of these infections moving into more temperate zones in the U.S.,” he says.

Milder winters also mean that surviving mosquitoes can start reproducing earlier, in early spring rather than closer to summer, says Sinnis. “Each breeding cycle increases the population by 10-fold. So by the time we get to summer, their populations have increased substantially,” she says.

Warmer temperatures also affect how viruses survive and thrive inside the insects. “If it’s warmer, the virus reproduces faster inside the mosquito,” says Oliver, “and [it] reduces the window of time between when the mosquito becomes infected and when it becomes infectious.” Studies also show that mosquitoes can become increasingly infectious over the course of a season, which in turn raises the chances that they can bite and sicken people.

Growing urbanization and densely

‘Mosquito populations are climate- and habitat-driven.’

—PHOTINI SINNIS,
PROFESSOR,
JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

packed cities—with less-than-ideal sewage and sanitation systems—also provide more and fertile environments for mosquitoes to lay eggs and proliferate. Around the world, “urbanization is occurring in a very haphazard fashion,” says Shepherd. In many cases, “it’s not planned and there is no community development, so these cities are ringed by vast shantytowns that are poorly served without water, sewage, and electricity.” These, he says, “are perfect places for infectious diseases to transmit.”

Another factor is likely fueling the rise of mosquitoes. With increased urbanization comes the destruction of the natural landscape, which contributes to a drop in the biodiversity of species. “The decreased abundance of species is allowing expansion of infectious-disease host species and their vectors [like mosquitoes], because they tend to be the most adaptable,” says Shepherd. As other insect species are killed off, for example, he says more adaptable ones like *Aedes* may be filling the void and flourishing.

WHAT’S THE BEST WAY to combat this growing assault from mosquitoes? Try to avoid coming into contact with them in the first place, and lower your chances of getting bitten if you do. That means wearing long-sleeved clothing when outdoors and spraying yourself with insect repellent. You can also eliminate mosquito breeding grounds by getting rid of any standing water around your home.

On a broader level, researchers are working on ways to reduce mosquito populations, including traps that attract different mosquito species with specific odors. The traps contain larvicides that destroy any eggs mosquitoes may lay, thus reducing their populations. But developing the traps requires more detailed knowledge about different species and how to attract them than is currently known, says Sinnis. “What we’d really like to do is to be able to predict when and where mosquito populations might be high,” she says. “But we need to learn more about the habits of specific mosquitoes and where they like to lay their eggs.”

Some scientists are even turning to genetic modification to manipulate mosquito populations. By introducing sterile males into a region, for example, they could drastically reduce or even eliminate future generations of insects. But this is still being tested, as researchers want to make sure that plummeting mosquito populations won’t have more lasting or unintended ecological consequences.

Another strategy that appears encouraging involves infecting mosquitoes with a bacterium that kills the viruses they may carry; it’s successfully reduced rates of dengue in Southeast Asia and Australia.

More such approaches are needed in order to fully understand and control mosquitoes and the diseases they carry, say experts. “If we are interested in addressing mosquito-borne diseases before they become really rampant, we need to devote more public-health funding to mosquito surveillance,” says Sinnis. With climate change affecting so many species, including mosquitoes, such knowledge is even more critical.

“Chances are, [mosquito-borne illnesses] are going to get worse,” says Oliver, “rather than better.”



Grief in Georgia

A balloon release at the vigil on Sept. 7 honoring the memory of 14-year-old Mason Schermerhorn, killed at Apalachee High School in Winder, Ga., three days earlier. Also killed were Christian Angulo, 14, and math teachers Richard Aspinwall and Cristina Irimie. Nine people were wounded. Police arrested both the accused shooter, Colt Gray, 14, and his father Colin Gray, 54; the latter faces charges “directly connected with the actions of his son and allowing him to possess a weapon,” said the director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

Photograph by Christian Monterrosa—The New York Times/Redux
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The View

CLIMATE

THE DAWN OF SUPERSTORMS

BY PORTER FOX

Earlier this summer, Hurricane Beryl broke virtually every early-season hurricane record. It was the earliest Category 5 storm in history, and the strongest July Atlantic hurricane, with winds of 165 m.p.h. As ocean and air temperatures spike, extreme weather is growing more intense than ever before. This is the dawn of the Superstorm Era—and it will only continue to rise, unless we take action to stop it. ▶

INSIDE

IS TEXTING WITH A
THERAPIST ACTUALLY EFFECTIVE?

WHERE THE KOCH NETWORK
IS PUTTING ITS MONEY

FEELING DIVIDED
IN A DIVIDED ISRAEL

More Category 4 and 5 hurricanes hit the U.S. mainland from 2017 to 2021 than from 1963 to 2016. Hurricanes today also last longer than they once did and move slower, multiplying the damage. Rapid intensification used to spin up once a century, but studies show that in the future, it could occur more frequently—especially in waters bordering the East Coast—putting cities like New Orleans, Houston, Tampa, and Charleston, S.C., at higher risk. By 2100, the number of major hurricanes, including a new breed of “ultra-intense” Category 5 storms with winds of at least 190 m.p.h., is expected to increase by 20%.

As with most anthropogenic catastrophes, the effects of climate change are compounding. Storm surge now rides on an elevated sea level, flooding coastlines with walls of water more than 25 ft. high (Hurricane Katrina, 2005). Because the atmosphere holds around 8% more water for every 2°F of warming, storms today carry vastly more precipitation—dumping up to 40 in. of rain in a day (Hurricane Harvey, 2017). One example of how the compounding forces of climate change are overwhelming coastlines, according to climate scientist Kerry Emanuel: if Superstorm Sandy had occurred in 1912 instead of 2012, it might not have flooded lower Manhattan.

Over the past 50 years, tropical cyclones have also taken nearly 800,000 lives worldwide and inflicted \$1.5 trillion in damages. At risk on the U.S. mainland are 44 million coastal residents from Texas to Maine, a dozen major seaside cities, thousands of coastal towns, half the nation’s oil-refining business, and major infrastructure like highways, airports, trains, and much of the shipping industry. By the end of the century, they will likely set the U.S. back \$200 billion annually.

In fact, plotting the cost of weather disasters since 1980 follows a trajectory eerily similar to that of CO₂ content in the atmosphere: 2022 was the third hottest U.S. summer in more than a century, in a year that saw 15 weather disasters cost more than a billion dollars each, and 2023 shattered that record, going down as the hottest sum-



Super Typhoon Yagi, the most powerful storm to hit Vietnam in 30 years, whips water on Phuong Luu lake in Hai Phong on Sept. 7. At least 127 were killed

mer in modern history. As of Aug. 8, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has reported 19 confirmed billion-dollar disaster events in the U.S. Adding an estimated .07 watts of heat to every square meter of land and water on the planet influences pretty much everything in the ocean and sky, including thunderstorms, blizzards, squalls, nor’easters, tornadoes, heat waves, and droughts.

HIRO MURAKAMI, a project scientist at NOAA’s Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory in Princeton, N.J., worries that regions with little to no experience with extreme weather are being drawn into storm country. A 2021 study by Yale University researchers showed that warmer waters will soon draw hurricanes north, inundating cities like Washington, New York, and Boston. A possible westward migration of the North Atlantic tropical cyclone generation zone could also result in an uptick of landfalls along the U.S. East Coast later this century. A recent study by Brooklyn’s First Street Foundation also shows how hurricanes will penetrate farther inland in decades to come, affecting U.S. states as far west as New Mexico, Kansas, and Wisconsin.

Millions throughout the U.S. remain unprotected. Flood insurance is optional in most of the U.S.; some Federal Emergency Management Agency loans are contingent on good credit; corrupt contractors flock to disasters because consumer-protection laws do not rein them in; and state governments often lack the funds and staffing to manage recovery. “This kind of unprecedented location may be much more high risk,” Murakami told me. “They have no dikes, no defenses.”

There is an option, though, Murakami says. If we stopped burning fossil fuels today, additional warming would begin to flatten almost immediately, as would the escalation of tropical-cyclone intensity. Worldwide disaster is by no means predestined in any way—not in hurricane country, typhoon country, the Horn of Africa, the Philippines, the U.S. East Coast, or the windswept island nations of the Pacific Basin. As we can see in the data, the science, and now in our own backyards, it is merely the result of inaction.

Fox is the author of Category Five: Superstorms and the Warming Oceans That Feed Them

Overturning the cradle of the Arab Spring



THE FRUIT VENDOR Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation 14 years ago inspired Tunisians to topple their longtime dictator and kicked off the

2011 Arab Spring. Of all the countries in the region that caught the revolutionary bug, Tunisia was the only one that managed to build a multiparty democracy with separation of powers and freedom of expression, for a while becoming the poster child of successful democratization.

Then came President Kais Saied, an uncharismatic constitutional lawyer, who was elected in 2019 on a populist anti-corruption platform that played to Tunisians' post-revolutionary disillusion with political gridlock and economic stagnation. Five years later, the birthplace of the Arab Spring has become the scene of alarming democratic backsliding.

The first major sign of trouble was in 2021, when Saied used the COVID-19 pandemic to centralize his power. The Tunisian President suspended the constitution, fired his Prime Minister, and invoked emergency protocols to govern by decree. In 2022, he went further still, dissolving parliament and rewriting the constitution. The persecution of opposition politicians, critics, activists, journalists, and union leaders has only increased since. That includes Rached Ghannouchi, leader of the main opposition Ennahda Party; Lotfi Mraïhi, head of the Republican Union Party; and Abir Moussi, president

of the Free Destourian Party. All three are now behind bars on trumped-up charges.

With Saied's term set to expire on Oct. 23, Tunisia's strongman is seeking five more years as President in new elections he scheduled for Oct. 6. But having spent his entire tenure dismantling democratic checks and balances, consolidating power, and muzzling dissent, this contest will be neither free nor fair.

DESPITE SOME PUBLIC CONCERN about Saied's autocratic drift, he remains relatively popular. His xenophobic and antiestablishment rhetoric resonates strongly with a large segment of the population that believes democracy did little to improve their living standards.

Saied's biggest vulnerability comes from the worsening socioeconomic conditions most Tunisians have experienced under his rule.

After all, the one thing people dislike more than a dictator is a dictator who fails to deliver the goods.

While Saied has so far managed to stave off a sovereign default on Tunisia's bloated foreign debt without resorting to a maligned but much-needed IMF loan, this has come at the cost of higher inflation, slower economic growth, and frequent food and fuel shortages. The government is also increasingly resorting to borrowing from the once independent central bank as well as local banks to cover its growing financ-

ing needs, which will further drive up inflation and create financial risks. As economic challenges deepen, citizens' trust in their government will falter. Demands for change will build. Protests and repression may follow. Perhaps there will even be calls for new elections.

But Tunisians will have little recourse after Kais Saied's near certain—and certainly illegitimate—re-election this October entrenches Tunisia's autocracy and marks the definitive end of the Arab Spring's last surviving democratic experiment. ■



Tunisia's President Kais Saied, elected to stamp out corruption, took on democracy instead

All credible would-be challengers to Saied have been imprisoned, scared into exile, or excluded from running. On Sept. 2, Tunisia's supposedly independent electoral commission—whose seven members were appointed by the President—approved just two relatively unknown candidates, in defiance of an order by the country's highest court to allow three additional candidates to run. One of them, Ayachi Zammel, has since been arrested and charged with falsifying ballot signatures (it is unclear whether he will be allowed to run).



Health Matters

By Jamie Ducharme

HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

In July, I read a study that found texting with a therapist is about as effective as meeting with one over video. I was shocked. How could a strong bond between patient and provider—one of the best predictors of success in therapy—form over text? But as I dived into the research, I kept finding the same thing: that meaningful therapeutic relationships can be built just through the exchange of words on a screen. **Text therapy really does seem to work.**

It may even offer unique benefits, says Thomas Derrick Hull, one of the researchers behind that July study and a former executive at virtual-therapy provider Talkspace. It's both immediate (you can fire off a message as soon as a difficult feeling arises) and asynchronous (your therapist can take time to craft a thoughtful reply). Some people may find it easier to express a dark or vulnerable thought in writing—and research finds that people benefit from translating their thoughts into written words, Hull says. Plus, he adds, text therapy may offer the benefit of “state-based learning,” the notion that it's better to study for a test in the room where you'll take it. Therapeutic principles may sink in better when delivered where people will use them, like at home or work.

Text therapy is not perfect—but no form of mental-health care is, Hull says. There will always be good and bad therapists and patient matches, whether therapy is delivered in private practice or through an iPhone. “I don't think there's anything about message-based care that reduces quality, in principle,” Hull says. Increasingly, the data are on his side.



For more health news, sign up at time.com/health-matters



The D.C. Brief

By Philip Elliott

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

WHEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST donors to conservative causes made explicit their electoral opposition to a second term for Donald Trump way back in February 2023, it came as something of a shock to the Republican orbit. After all, the powerful network organized under the auspices of billionaire industrialist Charles Koch had officially remained neutral in Trump's 2016 and 2020 campaigns, a sign of how uncomfortable his allies were with the nominee whose positions were so far afield from their own.

But by the time the network gathered at the start of 2023, its position on Trump was not really a point of discussion. The deadly Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021, was finally a step too far. The chief of the network's main political arm, Americans for Prosperity, told her patrons they were ready to back an alternative Republican who showed promise of winning. The group ultimately shoveled more than \$32 million toward former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley, and \$10 million more in broader anti-Trump efforts before throwing in

the towel. The hopes of reclaiming the party from this gate crasher were dashed.

It's been six months since Haley ended her bid, and just over seven weeks since Joe Biden followed suit. Vice President Kamala Harris has scrambled the electoral map, and might look like more of a threat than Biden on some key Koch issues. So where does that lead Koch World and their deep pockets?

NOT FAR FROM where they've been all along—doing their best to help Republicans not named Trump. Despite some pleas from Trump apologists, the leadership remains unbending in their decision to stay out of the presidential race.

Instead, **Koch-linked strategists say their main goal is to be a check against unified Democratic control of Washington.** To them, a

‘The Senate will continue to be our top priority.’

—EMILY SEIDEL, TOP ADVISER AT AFP ACTION

<
Former South Carolina
governor Nikki Haley
took in \$32 million from
Americans for Prosperity

progressive sweep of D.C. is the biggest threat this fall, and to that end, supporters have already knocked on more than 5 million doors to help their Senate prospects, especially those in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Montana.

At the House level, the Koch network—and those who take their cues from it—are focused on about two dozen races, many of them in deep-blue states like California and New York, where voters have shown a willingness to split their tickets. There are currently 17 Republicans from districts Biden won in 2020 and five Democrats from districts where Trump won. With Republicans holding a razor-thin majority, these races are likely to see some of the highest spending in some of the most expensive media markets.

While the Koch network may be steering clear of the top of the ticket, its money is flowing mightily toward these top-target congressional races. The main Koch-aligned super PAC, Americans for Prosperity Action, is in at major levels; it was investing just shy of \$70 million in all of 2022 and almost \$48 million in 2020. This year, campaign-finance reports covering spending through Aug. 12 show the group had already spent \$78 million on federal races. And there are still about three months of cash-soaked campaigning to count.

Outside groups continue to have an increasingly outsize role. During the 2020 campaign, those groups spent \$686 million, not far from the \$663 million of 2016. Already this year, they have spent \$1.3 billion. Of that eye-popping total, \$778 million has been dedicated to the presidential campaigns, suggesting the Koch decision to sit out the White House race hasn't choked off the fire hose altogether.



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The CO₂ Leadership Report By Justin Worland

SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

IN AUGUST, THE EPA'S GREEN-house Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) committed to sending \$27 billion to a range of organizations to support community climate and clean-energy projects. Within months, the funding will accelerate everything from local solar to residential energy efficiency, bringing the benefits of the energy transition to U.S. backyards.

Jahi Wise, who ran the implementation of the GGRF, told me on Sept. 3 it would fund tens of thousands of projects. "It's a vote of confidence in American communities and the American people," he says.

Indeed, the program, created by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), has been praised by environmental groups for bringing the energy transition to people's doorsteps, particularly in low-income areas and communities of color. But the projects financed by the fund are really just the beginning. **The GGRF has the potential to spark the broader financial innovation needed to push the private sector to invest in local projects—helping unlock trillions for the energy transition.**

"This is really a scale play," says Wise. "The idea here is to use this public capital to spur financial innovation and financial products that allow more projects to be completed."

The GGRF is the creation of a short section of the IRA, easy to miss in the sprawling law. When the law was hastily enacted in 2022, summaries often listed the fund as just one quick item on a long list of new programs. And yet,

it is the single biggest nontax item from the law.

Its structure is also somewhat complicated. It's divided into three subprograms, which then fund an array of independent nonprofit organizations. Those organizations are responsible for putting the money to work—convening with project developers, entrepreneurs, and communities to hammer out the best ways to use the funds while meeting federal mandates.

Potential financing tools are wide-ranging and might include loans for specific projects, debt to help a company enter a new market, or loan guarantees—to name a few. These

aren't new; the innovation comes in adapting them.

The private sector will be key to GGRF's success. To start, the fund is hoping to attract \$7 from the private sector for every \$1 of public money deployed. That will make the funds allocated by the IRA stretch further almost immediately.

In the long term, the program's impact hinges on whether private capital continues to finance projects the fund helped start. The GGRF's task is to demonstrate to investors that these deals make sense. "The idea here is not just to hit the kind of mission-aligned funds," says Wise. "It's to also reach deeper. It's the areas of the market that are a little more agnostic about mission and impact, but where we know there's a ton of capital that we need."

'It's a vote of confidence in American communities.'

—JAHİ WISE, FORMER GGRF DIRECTOR



For more insights on business and climate, sign up at time.com/co2-report

WORLD

The heartache of calling Israel home

BY DANYA KAUFMANN

I KNEW THAT AS SOON AS WE CAME HOME TO ISRAEL, I'd ask myself why we'd been so eager to get back. I'd disconnected for a few days in New York City with my family, even stopped wearing the hostage necklace I wore every day, and I knew it would be hard to return.

What I didn't know was that the day we got back I'd hear that the bodies of six young hostages had been found, shot by Hamas shortly before the Israel Defense Force (IDF) got to them.

In the weeks following Oct. 7, I couldn't hear anything about the atrocities without breaking down. I was a new mother, only beginning to understand my role protecting the world's most precious person, and it all felt too raw, too horrifying, too close. I walked out of rooms when people started talking. I watched no TV and avoided unnecessary news, shut down social media. I even averted my eyes in the street when I caught sight of the red letters on the hostage posters, name and age at the top, and BRING HIM/HER HOME NOW! printed beneath a smiling photograph.

After some weeks had passed, and the radio started playing regular songs and not only sad ones, I let myself look up at one of the posters, into the eyes of a hostage. Alex Lobanov. He wore an apron and stood next to a lemonade dispenser and smiled at me. The simplicity of the scene, contrasted with where I knew he was now, twisted my stomach. I thought of his mother.

At an intersection by my house hung a huge poster of Hersh Goldberg-Polin in a floral printed shirt. Having grown up near my office, in the Baka neighborhood of Jerusalem, in an American family like mine, he felt just one degree away from me. Many people I know knew him. Along with thousands of others, I walked with a flag to meet his funeral procession.

I'd held a poster with Carmel Gat's face on it—smile and curls—at one of the weekly protests for the return of the hostages a few months ago. She reportedly taught meditation and yoga to other hostages to help them survive. Almog Sarusi was from Ra'anana, where I grew up. His father runs an electrical-repair store in my parents' neighborhood and had a table outside with prayer cards and a picture of his son. Now there are a few candles, a makeshift memorial. I'd paused several times at Eden Yerushalmi's poster and wondered who her friends were. I'd read about Ori Danino, who fled the tragic party on Oct. 7 and then went back to save people.

All dead. Abandoned.

THE NIGHT WE were supposed to fly home from the States turned out to be the night (or morning, Israel time) of Hezbollah's planned massive missile attack and Israel's



A vigil in memory of hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin in Jerusalem on Sept. 1

pre-emptive strike. At the gate, we received news alerts about the Tel Aviv airport shutting down, power outages up north, and Israel's Defense Minister and IDF spokesperson warning civilians about the situation. For a few minutes—which coincided with the plane's boarding—it looked like this might be the beginning of a much bigger war we've all been dreading. With little information and no time, my husband and I decided not to board. We didn't want to take our toddler into a war zone.

Shortly after the plane took off, it became clear that this was not a regional war—just another crazy day in Israel. But now we were stuck. Almost all airlines had stopped flying to Israel, and the remaining flights were fully booked. We spent 15 hours at JFK with 20-month-old Imri, who shouted “Up-up” at every airplane he saw, but we did not go up.



‘Why are we here? How is this a normal place to raise a child?’

At the end of another futile day at the airport that week, wandering between the Dunkin’ Donuts and Hudson News, taking turns running after Imri, who was pulling apart all the retractable barriers, and waiting to hear about no-shows, I lost my patience and walked straight up to the pilots. “Please,” I begged them. “Is there anything you can do? I want to get my family home.”

What were we so anxious to get back to? Nothing, really. Work. Day care. Our own washing machine. Buying overpriced cottage cheese at the minimarket down the road. Being home. We had Central Park, but I missed the little playground by our house where Imri rides his baby bike and eats other kids’ Bamba.

Finally, we decided to throw away our tickets and buy new ones from a different airline, with a nine-hour layover in Athens, and a 3:30 a.m.

arrival in Israel. In the check-in line, an older Israeli couple smiled at Imri and told us their story of getting stuck without a flight. We met them again near the gate, looking for a smoking lounge. As soon as they found it, the woman sent her husband inside and then whispered to me, “He’s driving me crazy. If I don’t get some time away from him, I’m going to get divorced after 42 years.”

That particular blend of humor and honesty, immediate closeness and hot-blooded temper—I’d never met her, but I knew her.

The man in the seat next to me scrolled through X and Telegram for most of the flight, watching footage from the protests on the streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. As the plane neared Ben Gurion Airport, I heard a woman behind me mutter, “Dear, fascist country.” Her words were pained and loving, like a disappointed mother.

WHEN WE AWOKE the next morning, the names of the dead hostages they’d found had been made public. It was like reading the news in those first few weeks, checking one outlet after the other to make sure I’d gotten it right. The kind of news you can’t get out of bed from. The kind of news that devastates, nauseates, doesn’t leave you. Shock that they’d survived this whole time, and disbelief that they were shot just before we rescued them.

They should have been home. They should have hugged their parents and children and brothers and sisters so long ago. They should have been alive.

Before we left for our trip, I’d started entertaining thoughts of relocation, like many people I know. Our liberal friends, many of whom are also parents, are all wondering what we’re still doing here, with one war after the other, Jewish extremism on the rise, an economy that may soon fall apart, and a government seemingly more focused on resettling the Gaza Strip than on the saving the lives of those still being held there.

“Why are we here?” I asked my husband Yoav on the night of the Iranian missile attack a few months ago. I had actually gone to sleep knowing there would be missiles a few hours later. We woke up at 2 a.m. to go to our neighbors’ bomb shelter, where Imri petted their dog as we waited for the booms and the sirens to cease. Then we walked back to our building and put him back to sleep. “How is this a normal place to raise a child?”

At a protest the day after we learned of the hostages’ deaths, a man held a poster in Hebrew that read, **I NO LONGER RECOGNIZE MY COUNTRY**. I looked at it for a long time.

Here we are, in the place we were so desperate to come back to—feeling crushed, confused, and hopeless since we landed. Dreading tomorrow’s news.

But also feeling like we’re home.

And so with a tight chest and heavy legs, I drag myself outside with an Israeli flag week after week. To protest, fight, and try to protect everything good that still exists here. And to save the lives we still can.

Kaufmann is a writer and lawyer in Jerusalem

POLITICS

Trump



Stumped

The former front runner
is struggling to
adjust to Kamala Harris

**By Brian Bennett, Eric Cortellessa,
and Philip Elliott**



*Trump and
Harris at the
Sept. 10 debate in
Philadelphia*

PHOTOGRAPH BY WIN MCNAMEE

The two candidates for President of the United States are as different as any duo in history.

A billionaire businessman vs. a career prosecutor and politician; a son of privilege against the daughter of a middle-class single mother; one reckless, one cautious; a former Commander in Chief against the first Black and South Asian woman to claim the nomination. They hail from different coasts, different generations, different tax brackets. But as stark as the choice facing American voters this November may be, the nation had never gotten a glimpse of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris side by side before they squared off in Philadelphia on Sept. 10, in what may be their sole debate before Election Day.

For the Republican, the U.S. is a hellscape of rising crime, unchecked immigration, and economic misery. For the Democrat, the nation is beset by the division Trump has sowed, the abortion bans he ushered in, and the economic policies he passed that favor the rich at the expense of the rest. But beyond the canned salvos and campaign boilerplate, the high-stakes clash underscored how dramatically the presidential race has changed since midsummer, when even top Democrats conceded Trump appeared to be sailing to victory in his rematch with President Joe Biden. As plain as it is that Trump wishes he were still running against Biden, it is equally apparent that Harris has rattled him.

The split screen said it all: Trump glowered and grimaced, spewing old grievances and strange new attacks. The former President repeated a baseless internet rumor that migrant invaders were killing and eating pet dogs and cats in Springfield, Ohio, and claimed that Harris “wants to do transgender operations on illegal aliens in prison.”



From left: a campaign event in Grand Rapids, Mich.; watching the debate in Berkeley, Calif.; Trump and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in Glendale, Ariz., on Aug. 23

With sharp ripostes and canny traps, Harris baited Trump into boasting about his crowd sizes, grousing about the 2020 election, and standing up for the rioters who attacked the U.S. Capitol to thwart the peaceful transfer of power. In the nine years since Trump first burst onto the scene, no opponent—Democrat or Republican—has dealt with the 800-lb. gorilla of American politics as coolly, or gotten under his skin to such a degree.

Which is how it's been going for Trump for a while now. Despite weeks of speculation that Harris was poised to replace Biden at the top of the ticket, Trump and his campaign were caught flat-footed, left lurching from one attack line to another. More than once, top aides thought they had settled on a strategy, only to see the candidate himself upend it on the fly. According to a person close to Trump, the level of campaign infighting and backstabbing rivaled the 2016 operation, an infamous snake pit. Facing a new opponent, Trump reverted to his old ways.

In a matter of weeks, Trump frittered away his commanding position. Harris' smooth debut galvanized the Democratic base and unlocked a fundraising behemoth that dwarfed that of Trump and his allies. In the handful of pivotal swing states, her campaign is building on formidable operations she inherited from Biden, and boasts a striking

advantage in cash and reserved ad time between now and Election Day. “I think everyone was caught off guard by the way it shifted so dramatically,” says a person close to Trump.

For all that, the debate arrived with the race deadlocked. The polls showed Trump and Harris effectively tied across the battleground states, with both sides of the electorate more enthusiastic about voting this fall than they were earlier this year. Despite her deft consolidation of power and surge of support, Harris remained undefined for many Americans. And for all his late-summer stumbles, Trump was in a stronger position than at this stage of the race in either 2016 or 2020.

The biggest variable in the final weeks of the campaign may be Trump's trademark indiscipline. The campaign operation that brought him to his peak in July remains in place, augmented by late arrivals more inclined to “let Trump be Trump.” The candidate himself has cut deals for support with once unlikely allies like Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Elon Musk, and continues to test new attacks against Harris in search of one that will stick. Either he will become



only the second President to win back the White House after defeat, or he will author one of the most dramatic political collapses of modern times.

LESS THAN 24 HOURS before everything changed, an exuberant Trump stood on a rally stage in Grand Rapids, Mich., cracking jokes next to his new running mate, J.D. Vance. Trump asked attendees if they'd rather he run against Biden or Harris. The crowd cheered their preference for Biden, who was at that moment huddled with advisers in Rehoboth Beach, Del., mulling an exit from the race. A day later, Biden was out, Harris was mobilized, and Trump's bravado evaporated.

Behind the scenes, the former President was livid and disoriented at the abrupt turn of events. "Obviously, we had to ditch a bunch of stuff, and then overnight start new attacks," says a campaign official. Trump fumed at how the media was covering Harris' entry into the race, griping that "they never talk about me that way," according to a second campaign official. Trump felt like he was being punished for vanquishing his opponent 108 days too early. After a July on offense, the campaign spent August on defense, explaining away Vance's past statements about "childless cat ladies" and clumsily making amends with Republican Governor Brian Kemp of Georgia, just

weeks after Trump bashed him for not backing the baseless claims that the former President really won the 2020 election.

Trump, who previously reduced opponents to punch lines with pithy nicknames, tried out and then ditched multiple ones for Harris. Laffin' Kamala. Lyin' Kamala. Crazy Kamala. None seemed to land like he wanted. More recently, he's favored Comrade Kamala. "It's like a boxer with his guard up trying out jabs," says a former Trump aide. "I think it has taken him a while to get there with Kamala."

As Harris gained in the polls, bringing battleground states that tilted toward Trump into a dead heat, tensions within the campaign bubbled into view. Trump brought in sharp-elbowed loyalists from his previous runs, including 2016 campaign manager Corey Lewandowski. Lara Trump, the Republican National Committee co-chair and the former President's daughter-in-law, says Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles are still running the campaign's strategy,

as they have for more than a year. The return of Lewandowski, she says, represents a revival of the "scrappy" character of Trump's first campaign. "He brings back some of the spunk from 2016," she says.

For many Republicans, the only shift they want to see is an end to Trump's sexist and racist attacks on Harris. Trump has said world leaders would treat her like a "play toy" and amplified crude comments about her on social media that implied she had traded sexual favors to help her political career. At a gathering of Black journalists, he claimed Harris only recently "happened to turn Black." Bringing up how Harris frames her identity was a targeted effort to charge Harris as inauthentic, says the person close to Trump. "He said, 'OK, no one is hitting her, I'm just going to do it myself,'" the person says.

That explanation doesn't fly with Republican strategists and conservative leaders, many of whom have pleaded with Trump to steer clear of such comments and focus on the issues. "Don't give people an opportunity to vote emotionally," says a frustrated GOP operative working on the Trump election effort. The candidate appears unmoved. During an Aug. 21 rally in Asheboro, N.C., he drew laughs as he mimicked his advisers telling him, "Sir, please stick to policy, don't get personal," and joked about firing them.

'Trump should be talking issues, not throwing personal insults all over the place.'

—CHARLIE BLACK, GOP STRATEGIST

Podcaster Lex Fridman made one of the most direct efforts to get Trump to tone it down, telling him in an interview this month that he was more effective offering a positive vision for the future rather than criticizing Democrats. The former President rejected the premise. “Yeah, I think you have to criticize, though,” Trump said. “I think they’re nasty.”

Many Republicans now seem more resigned to Trump’s doubling down on his divisive strategy through Election Day. “Trump should be talking issues, not throwing personal insults all over the place,” says Charlie Black, a veteran Republican strategist who was a senior adviser on John McCain’s 2008 presidential campaign. “But he won’t do that. He doesn’t appear capable of it.”

IN THE MINDS of Trump defenders, the critics are looking at the situation all wrong. Trump enters the final stretch of the race with a clearer path to victory than in either of his past two campaigns. In the RealClearPolitics polling average for must-win Pennsylvania, he’s tied, whereas he was down 4.3% at this point in 2020 and 6.2% in 2016. Georgia and North Carolina are effectively tied, but advisers believe he is the favorite to pull out both traditionally red states. If Trump takes those three battlegrounds, campaign officials argue, the election is his. Polling in the past two elections, they note, underestimated his support. On the other hand, argues Democratic strategist Simon Rosenberg, there’s been a different pattern since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022: “Republicans have underperformed public polling and expectations, and we’ve overperformed.”

That it’s even this close is a cause for optimism, insist Trump confidants. “This is all during Kamala’s salad days, her debut, her convention, her selection of the running mate, her monster fundraising numbers,” says Kellyanne Conway, a former top Trump aide who still advises him. “If you look at the metrics during the last five weeks, she should be leading him everywhere, and she’s not.”

They also note some moves by the Trump campaign since Harris’ entry, most prominently persuading Kennedy to drop his independent bid and



Hours after the debate, from left, Senator Chuck Schumer, Harris, Joe Biden, Michael Bloomberg, Trump, and Vance attend the 9/11 Memorial ceremony in New York City

endorse Trump after weeks of prodding from Donald Trump Jr. and venture capitalist Omeed Malik. While Team Harris believes that Kennedy’s blessing will alienate moderate voters who recoil from the conspiracy theorist, Trump’s orbit believes it will coax more voters into their column. “By him coming off the ballot in some of these places, that is a benefit to the Trump team,” says Lewandowski.

In the coming weeks, Trump officials tell TIME, the campaign’s strategy is to continue to cast Harris as a far-left chameleon while keeping the focus on immigration, the economy, and crime—the issues on which Trump polls best. They also intend to make better use of resources they squandered in 2020, including a vote-by-mail operation targeted to boost Republican turnout. Vance will be deployed as “the disciplined policy attack dog,” says a campaign official.

Trump, on the other hand, has adopted a different media strategy: interviews with podcasters who are popular among young men, such as Fridman,

Shawn Ryan, and Logan Paul. Trump may be the first major candidate to so aggressively court the “frat vote”—a cohort of men below the age of 30 who could tip the scales in swing states like Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. At the same time, the campaign is planning a tour of female surrogates to target suburban women voters. If the campaign wasn’t as ready for Harris as it should have been in late July, says Trump ally Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, “they are now.”

Trump’s team is betting that his singular approach to politics can produce another victory. They know their strategy is vulnerable to the whims of their boss—someone who has long trusted, above all, his own instincts. Wiles and LaCivita may have built a disciplined operation designed to get him over the line, but in the final stretch, Trump is surrounding himself more and more with a rotating cast of loyalists who are encouraging him to embrace his impulses.

But the clearest sign that Trump’s bid for a return to the White House may be in trouble came after the debate ended. His top advisers claimed victory in a prepared statement hailing his “masterful” performance. Harris’ immediately asked for another showdown next month. —With reporting by NIK POPLI/WASHINGTON



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ENVIRONMENT

A Question Of Balance

THE NAVAJO NATION HAS FIRST RIGHTS TO THE WATER AROUND IT, YET PAYS THE MOST AND GETS THE LEAST

PHOTOGRAPHS AND TEXT BY ELLIOT ROSS



Tim Holiday on a pinnacle above
his family home in Monument
Valley Tribal Park, Arizona





IN THE NAVAJO NATION—A SWEEPING LANDSCAPE of red-rock canyons and desert that takes in the Four Corners—water is not taken for granted. Here, more than 1 in 3 Diné, as Navajo people call themselves, must haul water to their homes, often across long distances. The Diné use the least amount of water per person of anyone in the U.S., and pay the most.

Eighty miles away, residents of Utah's Washington County rely on essentially the same water supply, yet pay less for that water than almost anyone else in the U.S. and, until recently, consumed the most. The contrast reflects not only inequities of power and access. It also carries a warning that reaches beyond two arid communities. A megadrought has desiccated the American West, which is drier than it has been in 1,200 years. On June 22, the planet experienced its hottest day in recorded history, breaking a record set one day earlier. Dust clouds churn on the horizon. Much of the world may be headed this way.

The problem, as old as the land itself, was predicted. The hydrology of the Colorado River Basin is highly variable, a fact that was not fully appreciated (or was flatly ignored) by those who drafted the foundational policy that governs water use in much of the West—the 1922 Colorado River Compact. Despite warnings from experts, the compact based the amount of water

▲ TWO ARID COMMUNITIES

Left: Goulding, Utah, is the economic hub of Monument Valley and the only place in the eastern reaches of the Navajo Nation with piped water and electricity. Right: St. George, the seat of Washington County, is among the U.S.'s fastest-growing metro areas, with 1,416% growth in population since 1970

to be divided among its signatories on a brief period that proved to be one of the wettest in history. This flaw was compounded by tremendous population growth, Indigenous dispossession, competing values, procrastination, and deadlocked disputes over how water is used.

Now the federal government is drafting a new plan, one that anticipates a drier future. Two countries, seven states, 30 tribes, cities from Denver to San Diego, and local water managers are hashing out the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines, which when finalized next year promise to set the world's most litigated river system on a sustainable path. It would also include significant tribal input, meant to address structural inequities in a water supply divided along racial lines. Indigenous communities, whose relationship with the federal government has been largely defined by broken promises, remain deeply skeptical.

On paper, the Navajo Nation is drenched in water. Under the "first in line, first in right" principle that defines water use in the West, the Diné have first dibs on the same



declining supply that serves Washington County, which has roughly as many people on one-tenth the land: the Colorado River, its tributaries, and two underlying aquifers. Yet little of it reaches them. In 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, in *Arizona v. Navajo Nation*, that the federal government has no obligation to provide water to the Navajo Nation. But then, the most important effort to exercise “first rights” was already in peril.

The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project aims to deliver treated water from the San Juan River to 240,000 people via 300 miles of pipes. Conceived in the 1960s and begun in 2009, the \$2.1 billion project must be completed by Dec. 31 or the Navajo Nation loses its right to that water. It won’t be. Hopes now reside in U.S. House Bill 3977, which would extend the deadline to 2029 and appropriate \$689.45 million to finish the job.

Washington County has a \$2 billion water project of its own—one of the most ambitious and contentious in U.S. history. The Lake Powell Pipeline would involve 13 pumping stations pushing water up 2,000 ft. across 140 miles. The Washington County Water Conservancy District (locally known as the District) calls the project critical to a population that demographers predict may double by midcentury.

Here is a place drenched not on paper, but in fact. Thousands of swimming pools glitter like

diamonds in a desert bounded by green rectangles of Kentucky bluegrass. A local economy embracing tourism promotes the comforts of an oasis: shady tree canopies, ornamental fountains, manicured landscaping, and a few miles outside St. George, a new \$1 billion golf resort—the county’s 17th. News outlets in the 2010s put daily water consumption at over 300 gal. per person. Today, the District claims 153 gal. Either figure towers over the 5 gal. used daily by the Diné, who must drive miles over rough roads to collect it.

“Water is life,” Monument Valley resident Tom Holiday says, waiting for the 300-gal. tank in the back of his truck to fill. “People in the cities take it for granted and water their plants and grass. Here it’s precious. We think of water as a deity.”

IN PLACES WHERE WATER is scarce, living as if it were plentiful is no longer in fashion. The Lake Powell Pipeline is derided as a literal pipe dream by the conservation groups, tribes, and states that have delayed its approval. Under general manager Zach Renstrom, the District pivoted to water conservation, committing to a 20-year plan that will require vast sums of federal and state dollars, plus local fees, to maximize existing supplies; create a \$1 billion Regional Reuse System; and add 60 more miles to 275 miles of pipeline and 18 more wells, some up to a mile deep, to the 30 already in use. “We are wringing every last drop out of this lemon,” says Brock Belnap, the District’s associate general manager. It’s impressive what a community can achieve when it’s empowered by both policy and money.





WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH

The view across the future Chief Toquer Dam. When completed, a series of ephemeral drainages will form the county's sixth reservoir in the valley to the left



WATERMAN

Water district general manager Zach Renstrom in Sand Hollow Reservoir. Cast as a villain in the water crisis, Renstrom pivoted toward an ambitious conservation plan

Washington County isn't the cause of the Navajo Nation's thirst. The water gap is an enduring legacy of manifest destiny; the infrastructure, and legislation, that came with it still largely define how water is used. In the American West, irrigated agriculture uses a whopping 86% of fresh water consumed—the largest share by far going to animal-forage crops like alfalfa. Privately, a St. George resident told me, "Why should I compromise the things that bring me enjoyment when alfalfa is still being grown? I hate to say that out loud, but that's the reality." On the other hand, since 2002, water-strapped Southern Nevada, including Las Vegas, cut its use by 26% while adding 750,000 people—proof that measures like the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines really matter.

Moving between the two communities for a year, I found residents of Washington County largely unaware of the Diné plight, and earnest in their dismay. For their part, the Diné expressed neither surprise at how much water people in Washington County consumed, nor anger at the benefits that water brought. They just ask for the same opportunity.

Leaning against his wooden corral, framed by the iconic pinnacles of Monument Valley, rancher Billie Charlie put it succinctly: "We must prioritize humans, not corporations. Prioritize balance."

This project was supported by funding from the Center for Contemporary Documentation



◀ ▼
“USE IT OR LOSE IT”

“We need to learn how to thrive with half the water, two generations down the line,” says sixth-generation farmer Randall Holt, silhouetted against a pile of freshly ground alfalfa. Also seen below, alfalfa is the thirstiest of the crops that consume 86% of water in the West. Holt Farms LLC, one of the area’s largest employers, relies almost entirely on groundwater in an arid valley that has seen some of the nation’s worst aquifer depletion. In collaboration with the State of Utah, the Holts are trialing a voluntary approach to water use that challenges the “use it or lose it” principle that defines Western water rights—trading consumption for flexibility in a cooperative effort to bring the system back into balance





▲
2,500 SWIMMING POOLS

The largest of Washington County's pools, at the Desert Color Resort in St. George, covers 2.4 acres, with a shoreline stretching a half-mile. Fed by groundwater, it is one of the 10 largest freshwater pools in the world



▲
17 GOLF COURSES

In October, for the first time in 60 years, the PGA Tour is stopping in Utah. Designed on a lava flow at the cost of \$1 billion, the Black Desert Resort course is the county's 17th. "How many golf courses do we need?" one resident asked



WATER FOR A DAY: ELI NEZTSOSIE, NAVAJO MOUNTAIN

“The way I see my remote way of living is not a luxury—it’s a necessity,” Neztosie says, filling his family’s cattle troughs from his homemade water truck, and taking a drink himself. “Without keeping the traditional lifestyle you lose the language, the heritage, the bloodline. It’s the lifestyle that’s the glue, the binder that holds it all together. That in itself is the biggest sacrifice. It’s hard. It takes a lot of commitment.”



▲ **WATER FOR A DAY: EFFIE YAZZIE, MONUMENT VALLEY**

The Diné are 67 times as likely to lack running water as the average American, and spend 71 times as much for what they do get. Yazzie can opt to fill the 300-gal. truck-bed tank either in Goulding, 45 rough minutes away, where lines often stretch three hours, or fill from natural springs in the area, and risk contamination from livestock and uranium. The readiest access comes during the summer monsoon months, when water sometimes collects in shady canyon recesses

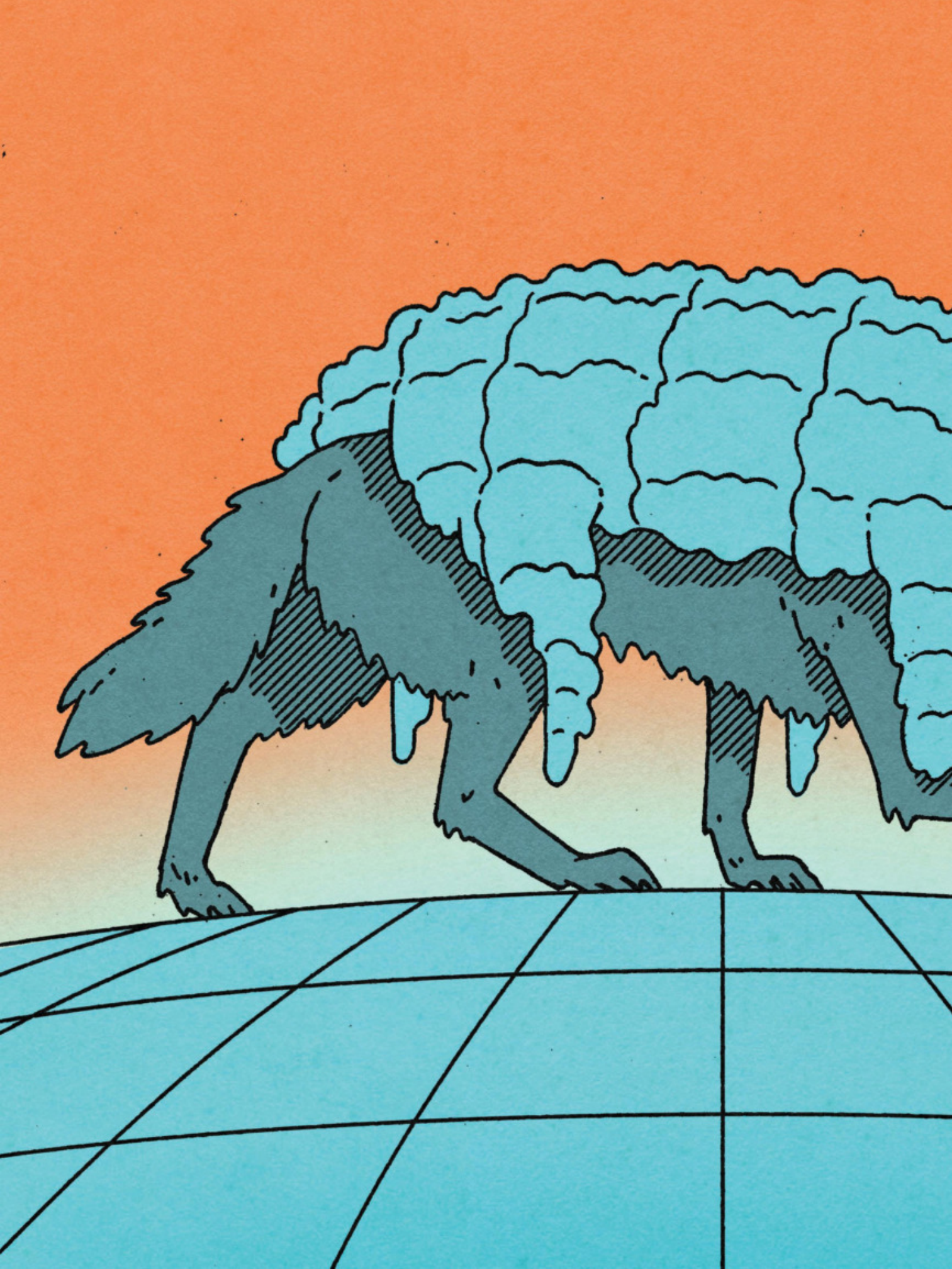
ENVIRONMENT

RUNNING WATER

"My kids would say, 'Mom, did we ever have running water?'" Linda Jackson says. "And I would say, 'Kids, we did all the running.'" The average American uses 16 gal. to bathe each day. For Jackson, a whole shower takes 2½ gal., so in the bathroom built separate from her house, she just washes her hair









SOCIETY

THE AGE OF SCAMS

Why you're constantly baited
by grifters—and more vulnerable
than you think

By Alana Semuels

NOT LONG AGO, MONICA COTELINGHAM FOUND HERSELF stuffing cash into a Bitcoin machine at a gas station in suburban Maryland and weeping.

Earlier that day, she had received a call from a phone number with the same area code as Cotelingham's father in Louisiana. When she answered, someone identifying themselves as a U.S. customs officer said the government had found a package addressed to Cotelingham that contained stolen passports and driver's licenses. She was in a lot of trouble; law enforcement was going to call her back. When Cotelingham's phone rang next, the number that came up was from local police, who told her the FBI would be in touch. Minutes later, she got a call from a number that matched the bureau's. The person on the line told Cotelingham that she could get out of the mess by depositing \$18,000 into a Bitcoin machine.

In retrospect, Cotelingham says, she should have known it was a scam. The game of law-enforcement telephone made no sense. All the callers had heavy accents. Each instructed her not to tell anyone what she was doing. The bank teller at Truist, where she withdrew the \$18,000, asked if Cotelingham was OK, and warned her of scams. Even the Bitcoin machine where she deposited the money had a warning, in big red letters, to beware of scams and fraud.

But Cotelingham, who received the calls on her first day of a medical leave of absence from her job as a psychiatrist, believed at the time that they were legitimate. And so, sobbing in distress, she stuffed \$10,000 into the machine until she asked the clerk for help to stop. "Even then, I think part of

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAN PAGE FOR TIME

me knew,” she says. “It was incredibly traumatic.”

Cotelingham’s experience is increasingly common. We are living in the golden age of scams. U.S. consumers lost a record \$10 billion to fraud in 2023, according to the Federal Trade Commission, a 14% increase over 2022. That tally is almost certainly an undercount. More than three-quarters of victims, including Cotelingham, don’t report to authorities that they’ve been defrauded. We are constantly baited by scammers—by text, by email, by phone. The average smartphone owner in the U.S. gets an estimated 42 spam texts and 28 spam calls per month, according to RoboKiller, an app for screening calls.

The scams themselves are more sophisticated than ever before, capable of duping the most skeptical consumers. There are romance scams, investment scams, and fake-job scams. Scammers target everyone from pharmacists in Wisconsin (trying to persuade them to send money because their credentials have supposedly expired) to employees of specific companies (sending emails or texts that say they’re from the CEO and instructing employees to buy gift cards). “We are at an epidemic level of fraud,” says Kathy Stokes, director of fraud-prevention programs with AARP.

The COVID-19 pandemic is one reason. It made people lonelier and more isolated, which research shows makes them more susceptible to fraud, and it pushed more transactions online, where we can more easily fall victim. One in 3 Americans experiences feelings of loneliness at least once a week, according to a recent poll from the American Psychiatric Association. Members of Gen Z are more anxious and depressed than previous generations—and three times as likely to fall for scams as baby boomers.

But there are other factors. Technology enables scammers to reach more marks, robo-dialing many more numbers in a day or using AI to send carefully crafted emails and text messages. It’s also given rise to online marketplaces selling hacker services, scam scripts, and other tools of deception. Social media helps scammers find information about individuals and use it against them. And fraudsters have more of that information because of increasingly common data breaches, and can use it to trick us into thinking they’re someone they’re not.

That specific kind of grift is known as an impostor scam. A perpetrator reaches out, pretending to be a government official, a bank representative, or a law-enforcement agent. Impostor scams like the one Cotelingham fell victim to were responsible for nearly half of all frauds reported to the FTC in 2023, with about 490,000 people reporting them. Americans said they lost \$1.1 billion to impostor scams last year, three times what they lost in 2020. The success of the impostor scam



illuminates another reason criminals are able to bilk Americans today. Our trust in institutions has collapsed, making it easier for scammers to pose as authority figures, says Stacey Wood, a fraud expert and professor at Scripps College in California. “Authority can look very different now,” Wood says. “If someone is skeptical of the U.S. government, they often trust someone else—who can scam them.”

Americans may not believe in the government or the media, but we want to believe in something—and sometimes that’s a stranger who says they can solve our problems, or love us, or give us our dream job, or take our money in exchange for a better life.

DOUG SHADEL, A FRAUD EXPERT and consultant who recently directed AARP’s Fraud Watch Network, has fought scammers since the 1990s. Back then, employed by the Washington State attorney general’s office, he used to bust so-called boiler rooms—places where dozens of people made scam calls, reading from prewritten scripts and dialing numbers one by one. The scammers might reach a few hundred people in a day, Shadel says, and would have to pay long-distance charges for the phone lines. Now, Shadel says, voice over internet protocol (VOIP) technology allows scammers anywhere to dial hundreds of thousands of phones in a day for free—what Shadel calls “spray and pray” dialing. They can “spoof” phone numbers, making it look like they’re calling from



‘We are at an epidemic level of fraud.’

—KATHY STOKES,
AARP DIRECTOR OF
FRAUD PREVENTION

a government number. And they know much more about who they’re calling than ever before.

There were 3,205 reported data breaches impacting around 353 million people in 2023, according to the Identity Theft Resource Center. As a result, many of our Social Security numbers, addresses, phone numbers, or affinity-group memberships are available to resourceful scammers. One California family, who requested anonymity for fear of being bilked again, lost \$400,000 when a scammer, armed with one of their Social Security numbers, called Bank of America 16 different times to try to change the password and information on an account, according to the family’s lawyer, Nick Barthel. Fifteen bank representatives refused, but the 16th was duped, according to Barthel, who says the scammer wired the family’s savings out of the account. (The bank has not refunded the family, Barthel says. (Bank of America says it cannot comment on pending litigation. Police eventually found the perpetrator, but he was deceased and the money was nowhere to be found.) “This could happen to anybody,” says Barthel. “All the guy needed was the basic information you would get from a data breach.”

This data often finds its way onto messaging apps like Telegram, says Frank McKenna, co-founder of PointPredictive, an AI firm that detects frauds. Cybercriminals can buy and sell tutorials and scripts for scamming people, as well

as victims’ personal information. For \$500, you can purchase a live scamming class, 25,000 U.S. phone numbers, and instructions for sending spam links, according to a report from the security firm Guard.io. “Social media platforms like Telegram began to emerge as these hubs of scam knowledge and transfer,” McKenna says. (Telegram CEO Pavel Durov was taken into custody in Paris on Aug. 24 and faces charges stemming from the platform’s alleged role in enabling criminal activity; Durov calls the charges “misguided.”)

Scam syndicates exist all over the world, from Southeast Asia to Mexico to the Middle East, says

Marti DeLiema, a professor who studies scams at the University of Minnesota’s School of Social Work. “This is the new mafia,” DeLiema says. The work can be lucrative. A 2024 report by the U.S. Institute of Peace found that transnational criminal networks based in Southeast Asia steal \$64 billion annually through scams. In Myanmar, according to the report, there are “scam compounds” where people who have been lured by fake online job ads are held prisoner and forced to make calls to try to swindle Americans.

The rise of artificial intelligence has been a boon for these scammers. A decade ago, you might have been the target of a poorly written email from someone claiming to be a Nigerian prince and asking for money to help them regain access to their wealth. Today, AI helps non-English speakers write more convincing missives. The technology can also be used to copy voices and likenesses to convince people that their family members are in danger. That’s what happened to Fauzia Vandermeer.

Vandermeer, a 51-year-old radiologist who lives in Baltimore, received a call earlier this year from a number she didn’t recognize. She ignored it, but the person called again, so Vandermeer picked up, worried that something had happened to a family member. She heard the sound of her sister’s voice, sobbing and asking for help.

“I was totally freaking out,” Vandermeer remembers. The voice that resembled her sister’s told Vandermeer that she was at a Walmart and had gotten into an accident. Then a man came on the line. He said that Vandermeer’s sister had hit his van, which had kilos of drugs in it, and that he needed to be compensated. Vandermeer was in her car, ready to drive to the Walmart, when the man told her that the matter needed to be dealt with “sensitively,” she says. Suspicious, Vandermeer asked one of her children to try to locate her sister, which they did with the Find My Friend function on their iPhone. Vandermeer’s sister was at home.

Vandermeer sidestepped the scam, but says she easily could have been victimized. “To hear a loved one on the phone, crying for help,” she says, “immediately you are kicked into this stress response.”

People are more likely to fall prey to scams when they are in a heightened emotional state. That’s why scammers try to target your emotions, telling you that you’ve won some sort of prize or money, or that something terrible has happened. It’s a big reason people get duped by frauds that strike observers as obvious. A 2021 AARP study found that scam victims reported experiencing twice as many stressful life events in the past year as nonvictims.

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE says it has stepped up efforts to catch and prosecute scammers who target Americans, even when those criminals are in other countries. From July 2022 through June 2023, the department says it pursued 300 criminal and civil actions against more than 650 defendants who collectively stole more than \$1.5 billion from over 2.4 million victims. U.S. authorities also partner with foreign law-enforcement offices. One such collaboration last year led Indian police to raid call centers, arresting 26 people and seizing equipment used in scamming, according to a senior DOJ official, who says a similar effort is under way in Ghana.

Some people, frustrated with the government’s inability to combat scammers, have taken on the task themselves. They’re known as scam baiters, and they embrace a kind of vigilante justice—working to lure the scammers into targeting them and then hacking into their computers or collecting evidence they can turn over to authorities.

One such scam baiter is Jim Browning. He’s an IT specialist in Ireland who got frustrated by the bombardment of scam calls and emails he was receiving. Browning, who uses a pseudonym, tries to catch scammers and turn them over to authorities, as well as to educate viewers on his YouTube channel, which has 4.3 million subscribers. His technological prowess offers him—and his viewers—insight into who the perpetrators are and how their operations work. In one of his most-watched videos, Browning accesses CCTV camera footage to watch Indian scammers run the same grift that duped Monica Cotelingham. The footage shows young men sitting in cubicles in a call center, dialing potential victims until eventually one finds a mark. The scammer instructs the target to deposit money into a Bitcoin machine before passing the phone to his superior—a “closer,” Browning explains, someone with better English and more experience.

‘The percentage of people who actually get arrested is tiny.’

—JIM BROWNING,
SCAM BAITER

Browning’s channel illustrates how hard it is to stop people from being scammed, even when they’re made aware that a crime is unfolding. In the video, Browning hears where the scammers tell the victim to deposit the money, calls the location—a store in Michigan—and reaches a clerk. Browning tells the clerk that the woman stuffing money into the store’s Bitcoin machine is being scammed. The clerk acts quickly, passing the information on to the woman. But she can’t be deterred. “She’s not budging on thinking that it’s real,” the clerk tells Browning. It’s also why Browning, who has worked as a scam baiter for a decade, is skeptical about law enforcement’s ability to counter fraudsters. “I have encountered thousands of scam operations,” he says, “and the percentage of people who actually get arrested is tiny.”

Another scam baiter, an American who uses the alias Kit Boga, tries to torment or prank the scammers as a form of payback. Boga, who has 3.6 million subscribers on YouTube, will give scammers access to his computer and then go into theirs to delete files. He once teamed up with other scam baiters to send glitter bombs to perpetrators. He says he takes these steps because law enforcement isn’t equipped to deal with all the scammers out there and he wants to educate people about the risks. “This is,” Boga says, “a pandemic-type situation.”

Pierogi, the nom de guerre of a popular YouTuber who runs a scam-baiting channel called Scammer Payback, says he has started feeding federal authorities information about scam rings. “All different sorts of agencies have knocked on my door,” says Pierogi, a onetime cybersecurity expert who adopted the pseudonym because his wife is Russian. (Yes, he knows pierogi are Polish.) Yet even when police get involved, it can be hard to put scammers away. A conviction can require law-enforcement cooperation across multiple countries and victims willing to testify. Scammers sometimes still escape with just a slap on the wrist. “We’re making it harder for the scammers, but they’re also getting smarter,” Pierogi says. “It’s this cat-and-mouse game.”

The true toll of these scams goes far beyond the financial losses. In the age of scams, consumers are stuck in a vicious cycle: a lack of faith in institutions makes us fall victim to fraud, which in turn makes us even less trusting of institutions. Monica Cotelingham is still reeling from the scam that targeted her in 2022. She says she’s less trusting and never answers her phone if it’s not someone in her contacts. “I’m very careful about what information I reveal,” she says. She was too trusting just once, she says—and now she finds it difficult to believe in anyone at all. □

TIME100

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LATINO LEADERS

17 trailblazers *CHANGING THEIR industries,*
THE U.S., AND THE world

CAMILA Mendes

ACTING AUTHENTICALLY

From her breakout role on *Riverdale* to her star turn in *Do Revenge*, Camila Mendes is no stranger to playing a seemingly unshakable, popular high school girl with complex emotions and motivations. But sometimes, she says, it can be “exhausting” to generate that kind of self-assuredness. “When I’m playing characters more like me, it’s a different energy.” After portraying the ambitious but out-of-place Ana Santos in the rom-com *Upgraded*, she said her dad told her it was nice to see her play a character truer to who she is.

Mendes, 30, says that while she’s not looking to play only Latina characters, she always tries to infuse some sort of *Latinidad* into her roles so they feel more authentic to her. In *Do Revenge* and *Upgraded*, she was able to get the characters’ names changed to root them in Latin heritage, she says. Most recently, she co-starred in *Música*, a movie she described as a celebration of Brazilian culture. She felt the weight of responsibility trying to do two things at once: provide positive representation for an underrepresented group and do it in a way that feels real and not forced. “It’s really hard to walk that line,” she says, but “if you stick to being authentic to yourself, then you can’t really go wrong.” —Moises Mendez II





CRISTINA Rivera Garza

WRITING FOR JUSTICE

Cristina Rivera Garza believes that all books are personal, but she says her latest, *Liliana's Invincible Summer*, "comes with a wound that is still open." Rivera Garza's sister Liliana was 20 years old when she was murdered in 1990 in her native Mexico. An arrest warrant was filed for the primary suspect, Liliana's ex-boyfriend, but he absconded and the case fell apart. In her genre-defying memoir or Autobiography, now 59, sets out on a quest to track down her sister's case file and finally find the man who killed her. She hopes the book, which won the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Memoir or Autobiography, furthers the global conversation about gender violence.

In writing *Liliana*, Rivera Garza found herself navigating the relationship between grief and translation. "I think English proved to be a kind of buffer with the experience that I was trying to explore," she says. "I experienced the loss of my sister in a different language. Writing the story, or sections of the story, in English allowed me a certain kind of protection."

Fresh off a writer's residency in Berlin, Rivera Garza is currently running a Ph.D. program in creative writing in Spanish at the University of Houston. She considers the program, the first of its kind in the U.S., to be a kind of activism for devoting more resources in the U.S. to translated works and for the Spanish language. The second most-spoken language in the U.S. still needs its champions. —Meg Zukin



AMAR Santana

COOKING GLOBAL CUISINE

Amar Santana always wanted to cook. As a child growing up in the Dominican Republic, "I used to take, like, three rocks and make a fire, take a little metal can, and bake wild cherries with a little sugar," he says.

After moving to New York City, he won a scholarship

to the Culinary Institute of America, then went on to cook in celebrity chef Charlie Palmer's restaurants. But he waited over a decade after *Top Chef* launched before applying for a spot on the show. "I used to tell myself, 'You don't speak English very well, so forget about it,'" Santana, 42, says. He was eventually cast on Season 13 and came in second. He competed again in the show's international season, set in London, making it to the final six.

Today Santana runs Broadway, a global restaurant in Laguna Beach, Calif., and Vaca, a Spanish one in Costa Mesa. "I would like to do fine dining—old-school tablecloth, cheese cart, the whole thing," he says. "But the other side of me, I want to open a Dominican restaurant. I would like to play music and sell plantains and rice and beans. I would make a lot of money, I think, because I feel like that's what people want."

—Eliana Dockterman



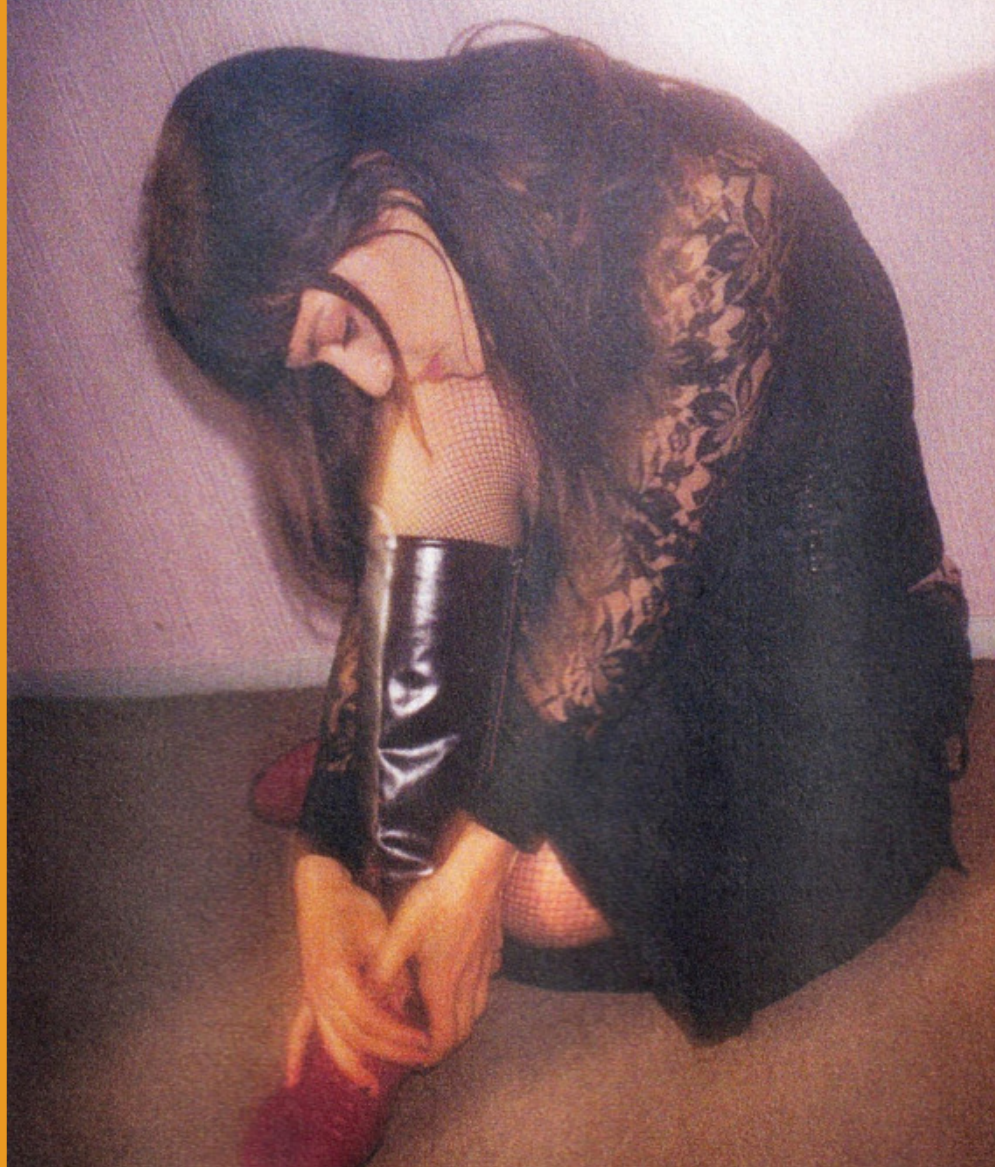
TEFI Pessoa

SOCIAL MEDIA SENSATION

In the influencer world, burning bright and quick is easy. What's harder is building an audience that lasts. Estefania Pessoa, better known online as Tefi, is determined to be in the latter camp. "I see my career as a marathon vs. a sprint," she says.

Pessoa, 33, is a content creator with an audience of over 2 million followers across TikTok and Instagram. This year she joined a group of influencers as a co-host on Prime Video's *Influenced*, a talk show executive-produced by Reese Witherspoon's Hello Sunshine. She's also a red-carpet interviewer, though she might be best known for her elaborate breakdowns of pop-cultural events throughout history.

Even though she speaks Spanish and grew up around "more Miguels than Michaels" in Miami, she says people try to negate her *Latinidad* because she was born in the U.S. Says Pessoa, the daughter of a Colombian mother and a Brazilian father: "I think that if my ancestors met me, they would like me." —M.M.



MARÍA Zardoya

**PAYING HOMAGE
TO HER HOMELAND**

María Zardoya, the front woman of the Latin indie pop band the Marías, feels like she's existed between two worlds almost all her life. She was born in Puerto Rico and grew up in the Atlanta suburb of Snellville, Ga., where she felt too Latin to fit in. But when she visited Puerto Rico, she didn't feel Latin enough. It's a familiar feeling among a large swath of young Latinos in the U.S. And in a sense, Zardoya says, she and the band also exist in this liminal space.

"I feel like that sort of identity thing that I grew up with kind of shows itself in the music industry as well, and I'm still figuring it out," she says.

After releasing their debut album

in 2021, the Marías were asked to be a featured artist on Bad Bunny's juggernaut of an album *Un Verano Sin Ti*, and they quickly went from making a name for themselves in the indie world to being pulled directly into the mainstream. The song they collaborated on, "Otro Atardecer," has accumulated over 450 million streams on Spotify. Zardoya says she feels a sense of community among Latinos, like fellow Puerto Rican Bad Bunny, in the music industry. "Anytime you can bring visibility to your homeland, you feel proud to do that," she says.

In May, the Marías put out their sophomore album, *Submarine*. Zardoya got into Buddhism and lived a Zen lifestyle while writing the album, and one of the main lessons she learned is to be mindful of the present moment. As the band reaches new heights, she reminds herself: Nothing else exists, not the future or the past, only right now. —*Moises Mendez II*

MICHELLE Freyre

**NEW FACE OF
LEADERSHIP**

Michelle Freyre believes beauty is more than a three-step skin-care routine.

"To so many Latinas, it's a real external representation of who you are," says the 53-year-old global brand president of Clinique and Origins at Estée Lauder. "My mom taught me a lot about beauty, not just about being made-up, but to feel my best and most empowered self."

Freyre, whose introduction to skin care and makeup was as a customer at a Clinique counter at her local retail store in Puerto Rico, where she grew up, is now using those lessons to inform her work as the leader of decades-old, billion-dollar cosmetics brands with a global reach.

As Freyre rose through the ranks of the business world, she says, "it took a while for me to feel safe and be my authentic self." But her visibility has proved beneficial to other Latinos at the company and across corporate America.

"There was no one that was Latino when I was growing up that was above me, which is just a testament to the work we have to do," she says. "I do feel a huge responsibility to pay it forward. Because I do know that now they can look at me. But I have to go and pull them up with me and make that happen." —*Solcyré Burga*





ANA Navarro

ICONOCLASTIC COMMENTATOR

Growing up during a time of upheaval in Latin America drew Ana Navarro to the political world. Born in Nicaragua, she immigrated with her family to Miami in 1980 because of the Sandinista revolution. “I think you go one of two directions—either you realize that democracy matters and being involved matters and politics

matters and become engaged, which is what happened to me, or you want nothing to do with that,” she says.

Navarro, 52, became a political consultant in the Republican Party, serving in former Florida governor Jeb Bush’s administration and working on former Arizona Senator John McCain’s 2008 presidential campaign. “Many, many times, I was the only Latina in the room,” she says.

Now she’s a co-host of *The View*

and a CNN political commentator, one of the leading Latina political voices on television and a vocal critic of former President Donald Trump. “Things have changed—I think dramatically—in the way that people see diversity and embrace it and value it,” she says. “People don’t just see you as a Latina commentator or a Latina host, but as a host of *The View* who can talk about any political topic [and] current affair.”

—Chantelle Lee

WILSON Cruz

BARRIER-BREAKING ACTOR

Wilson Cruz became the first out gay actor to play an out gay character on prime-time TV when, at age 20, he portrayed Enrique “Rickie” Vasquez on the 1994 show *My So-Called Life*. “I understood that I was giving young people and their families permission to see themselves in me,” Cruz, now 50, says. “I knew that I wasn’t the only one who was having difficult conversations with his family about his sexuality.” The breakout role was what got him to come out to his own parents, and his father did not take it well, kicking Cruz out of his home. It took a year before they reconnected. But his father’s eventual acceptance reassured Cruz that being public about his sexuality was the right decision.

Cruz has since starred in *Rent*, portrayed an HIV+ doctor on *Noah’s Arc*, and since 2017 played Dr. Hugh Culber, a character he says he made Puerto Rican, on *Star Trek: Discovery*.

“It would be a lie to say that I didn’t see how far we’ve come since 1994,” Cruz says, but he adds, “There’s still a lot of work to do.” —S.B.





ISABEL Casillas Guzman

BOOSTER OF BUSINESSES

The Latino population has been increasing in the U.S. for years but hadn't seen a corresponding increase in Latino-owned businesses created—until now. That change is in no small part thanks to Isabel Casillas Guzman, administrator of the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Guzman, 54, who is Mexican American, has overseen a transformation in the way the agency interacts with business owners, using technology and education to help more people access loans backed by the SBA. The changes have resulted in more small-dollar loans and more loans to underserved communities, according to the SBA. On her watch, SBA-backed loans to Latino-owned small businesses have doubled, SBA-backed loans to Black-owned small businesses have more than doubled, and SBA-backed loans to women-owned ones have increased by 70%.

In March, *The Hill* published an op-ed praising Guzman but criticizing her for favoring underserved communities at the expense of older, white business owners. She says that the SBA focuses on who its customers are—and women and people of color are starting businesses at the highest rates. “It’s important for our democracy, our economy, and our global competitiveness,” she says, “that we make sure all Americans can be successful.”

—Alana Semuels



HEZLY Rivera

GYMNAST ON THE RISE

At 16, gymnast Hezly Rivera was the youngest member of the 2024 U.S. Olympic contingent, and took home the team gold in Paris. But even at such a young age, Rivera is taking charge of her athletic career and setting ambitious goals.

A native of New Jersey, Rivera realized she needed elite training in order to earn a spot on an Olympic team, so she persuaded her family to move to Dallas so she could train

with Valeri and Anna Liukin, parents of Nastia, a 2008 Olympian. “I didn’t have any doubts,” she says of asking her family to move. The risk paid off when Rivera became a surprise member of the women’s gymnastics team for Paris. While she didn’t compete in the team final, she has her sights set on L.A. in 2028. She has become a living example of the motto that guides her: “Sí, se puede,” or “Yes, you can.” “My parents are from the Dominican Republic, so I am very tied to my culture,” she says. “I want to inspire young Latinas to know they can do anything they put their minds to.” —Alice Park



EUGENE Hernandez

SPOTLIGHTING NEW VOICES IN FILM

The first time Eugene Hernandez attended the Sundance Film Festival, in 1993, “I didn’t know what a festival was,” he says. “I kept hearing about Sundance as this place where these cool movies that really were meaningful to me were coming from.”

Hernandez, 55, is now the director of that very festival, as well as the head of public programming at Sundance Institute. He previously helmed the New York Film Festival, also serving as senior vice president of Film at Lincoln Center; before that, he founded IndieWire. “I didn’t grow up with friends or family who worked in the industry, or with the means to be able to get internships,” says Hernandez, who was born and raised in Indio, Calif.—all four of his grandparents were from Mexico. Now he knows he’s in a rare position, as a person who can bring new voices to audiences. “It’s such a great moment,” he says, “for a true sense of discovery and diversity among cultural leaders.” —Stephanie Zacharek



NAVA Mau

CONNECTING THROUGH THE SCREEN

When *Baby Reindeer* arrived on Netflix, there was nothing to indicate it would become one of the streamer's top 10 most popular English-language series of all time. But according to Nava Mau, one of its breakout stars, the show's success was simply an "amplification" of how she already felt about its story. "It was beautiful to feel this overwhelming connection," says Mau, who plays Teri, a woman who, like herself, is transgender.

Before shooting *Baby Reindeer* in 2022, Mau, 32, who was born in Mexico City and grew up in San Antonio,

had starred in the HBO Max dramedy *Generation*. But she quickly realized Teri would be a uniquely important role. "I knew this character was going to be among the first of her kind when it comes to representation of a trans woman, and especially a trans Latina woman, onscreen," she says. Mau was nominated in July for an Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie, the first transgender woman to be recognized in the category. Now, after the premiere of her short film, *All the Words But the One*, she is slated to appear in the fifth season of Netflix's hit series *You*. But it's her portrayal of Teri that seems to have struck a chord. "People get really emotional sometimes, and it takes me right into that place with them," she says. "But I take it as a celebration. I take it as a gift that we all get to connect around this." —Megan McCluskey



JULIO Frenk

ADMINISTRATOR FOR ALL

When Julio Frenk steps into the role of chancellor at UCLA in January, he will be the first Latino to hold the top job in the school's 105-year history. What guides his leadership is a concept he calls "reciprocating the generosity of strangers."

"It's the idea of accepting people who are very different from you, who speak differently, and live differently," says Frenk, 70, who comes to his new job after nine years as president of the University of Miami.

Frenk, who earned a medical degree in Mexico and has also served as dean of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, sees that mindset as critical for the two fields in which he has built a career—health care and higher education. In health care, he says, "the idea is that the entirety of society is your patient." As Mexico's Secretary of Health from 2000 to 2006, he developed a universal insurance program that provided access to health care for 55 million uninsured in the country.

As a college administrator, Frenk has been focused on how institutions of higher education can offer a model that serves those outside of academia as well. "What we can do internally within a university [is] to make sure we promote diversity, inclusion in every sense, equity, and the sense of belonging," he says. "If we do that in the right way, then we are setting an example for our larger society." —A.P.



TANYA Saracho

RESOLUTE STORYTELLER

Tanya Saracho is not going to pretend that this is an easy time to tell the kinds of stories that have made her one of TV's most distinctive voices. A producer, screenwriter, and playwright best known for creating the acclaimed Starz drama *Vida*, Saracho is passionately committed to the authentic representation of

queer and Latino characters in particular. But the entertainment industry's poststrike era of austerity has been hard on projects that center the experiences of anyone who isn't straight or white.

"The moment is so tumultuous," Saracho says. "We're not in vogue right now." Yet the 48-year-old, who was born in Sinaloa, Mexico, and moved to McAllen, Texas, as a teen, has never considered giving up.

"Television is going through some growing pains," she says. "To survive it, you put your

head down and write the stories." She has used her overall deal with Universal Studio Group to keep crafting shows that spotlight the Latino and LGBTQ communities. And she is steadfast about using her foothold in the industry to help other outsiders claim a seat at the table.

Of course, "the correct revolution includes us building our own table," she says. But as it stands right now, "it's like: Let us sit here. And value us. And put a damn place setting out for us." —*Judy Berman*



GEORGE Lopez

GROUNDBREAKING COMEDIC FORCE

Since his days doing stand-up in the 1980s, George Lopez has been a champion of Latino voices. Four decades into his career, the trailblazing comedian is still spotlighting the Mexican American experience on television.

Lopez's breakout sitcom, *George Lopez*, which started in 2002, boosted visibility on television by depicting a Latino family in a nuanced and relatable way. He became the first Mexican American to host an English-language late-night show when *Lopez Tonight* premiered in 2009. And his current show, *Lopez vs. Lopez*, the third season of which premieres on NBC this fall, showcases not just Latino culture but also universal experiences of family life as he acts alongside his real-life daughter Mayan.

Lopez, 63, has both witnessed and inspired change in the industry since his first sitcom aired. Now "we have no problem finding Latino writers," he says. "What we struggled to find 22 years ago are in abundance." —*Nik Popli*



CLAUDIA Romo Edelman

REBRANDING A COMMUNITY

It wasn't until Claudia Romo Edelman, 53, arrived in the U.S. a decade ago, after working for 25 years around the world, that she heard the word *Hispanic*. "I started learning that in America, they invented a word that means that 26 different countries all of a sudden are one group, and that I was going to belong to that group, and that that group was not terribly well perceived."

Romo Edelman, who is Mexican, has a background in marketing at a massive scale; she helped launch such high-profile initiatives as Bono and Bobby Shriver's (RED) and the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals. So she set about changing the perception of the Latino community among its roughly 60 million members and for America more broadly. In 2017, she founded the We Are All Human foundation, which focuses on diversity. And in 2019, she launched Hispanic Promise, working with corporations to help prepare, hire, retain, promote, and celebrate Hispanic employees.

"The work that I'm doing is very much inviting companies, decisionmakers, and Latinos everywhere to take action," she says, "so that we can be seen as what we are: positive contributors to the country." —Belinda Luscombe



AUBREY Plaza

DEFYING STEREOTYPES

Aubrey Plaza is having the kind of year that Hollywood publicists dream of. Following her much lauded turn in the hit HBO series *The White Lotus*, the former *Parks and Recreation* actor premiered the indie film *My Old Ass*, in which she plays a 39-year-old woman—Plaza turned 40 in June—advising her younger self; she has become a celebrity face of the WNBA right when the league is blowing up; and this fall she will star in both Francis Ford Coppola's much-talked-about dystopian drama *Megalopolis* and the Marvel TV series *Agatha All Along*.

"I have a different kind of experience than a lot of other Latinx actors

because a lot of people don't even know that I'm half Puerto Rican," she says. "It's something that I always like to remind people of and bring to the table."

Before they began filming *Megalopolis*, Coppola invited his actors to workshop the script, improvise, and even rewrite parts of their characters. And the *Agatha* team approached Plaza early in the process about joining the show, allowing her to help shape the villain she'd play. "My journey has been a lot about infusing my heritage into these stories and characters in ways that people might not think to do," she says, "because people have kind of put Latina characters in such a box."

Plaza says she's always on the lookout for opportunities "to show the younger generation there's all kinds of Hispanic characters. It's not just these stereotypes." —Eliana Dockterman

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Time Off

ALFONSO CUARÓN GOES LONG

BY STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

The Oscar-winning filmmaker finds pathos in our lonely present in his first TV miniseries

INSIDE

KATE WINSLET REVISITS A STORIED LIFE

THE SINGULAR APPEAL OF SALLY ROONEY

APERCEPTIVE, GENEROUS-SPIRITED CHILD draws on her imagination when she's subjected to the cruelty of a boarding-school headmistress. A lone astronaut, cradled in a damaged space capsule and having lost any hope of returning to Earth, experiences a hallucination that saves her life. A young household servant, abandoned by the man who's gotten her pregnant, miscarries—though his betrayal helps her define what family truly means to her. Loneliness, so universal it has virtually become trademarked the Human Condition, is everywhere in art, and in life: we tend to fetishize it, or at least dab it with a perfume of sentimentality. But Alfonso Cuarón, now more than 30 years into a wide-ranging career that spans pictures like the Frances Hodgson Burnett adaptation *A Little Princess*, the space reverie *Gravity*, and the memoir-as-film drama *Roma*, is more interested in subtle emotional textures, in gradations of feeling that are always specific to the character at hand yet also joltingly recognizable. And now he brings his big-screen, big-story gifts to a limited series, an adaptation of Renée Knight's 2015 psychological thriller *Disclaimer*.

For Cuarón, who has a gift for making elegantly shaped pictures, structuring the seven-part series, streaming on Apple TV+, was a challenge but not necessarily a departure. "Some of the filmmakers I deeply admire have ventured into this [series] format," he says in a Zoom call from his home in London. "Ingmar Bergman with *Scenes From a Marriage*, or David Lynch with *Twin Peaks*, or [Lars] von Trier with *The Kingdom*." The point wasn't to do something familiar, but to try something new. He had read *Disclaimer*, and wanted to adapt it, even before he made the 2018 multiple-Oscar-winning *Roma*. But it took him a while to realize that the story could be better told in a series rather than a movie. "I was challenged because I have never done anything that is overtly narrative. My films tend to be narratively very sparse. And I said, 'Well, maybe that's something I don't know how to do.'" Why not try? Which, as he knows, is the best way to learn.

IN DISCLAIMER, CATE BLANCHETT plays Catherine Ravenscroft, a successful London documentary filmmaker with a stable, devoted dullard of a husband, Robert (Sacha Baron Cohen), and a grown but directionless son, Nicholas (Kodi Smit-McPhee), who shows nothing but disdain for her. One day, Catherine receives a package, sent anonymously, containing a novel whose plot mirrors events from the early years of her marriage: She and Robert, along with Nicholas, then very young, have gone to Italy for holiday. After Robert is summoned back to London on business, Catherine, feeling lonely and neglected, flirts with a charming young student she meets on the beach, Louis Partridge's Jonathan. Then, tragedy: Jonathan saves Nicholas from drowning, but he himself drowns in the process. Catherine leaves the scene, claiming not to have known the man who saved her son. He was just an anonymous hero, a kind of servant who had ensured the future of her safe, comfortable lifestyle.

But the young man had parents who, of course, felt his loss keenly. Jonathan's mother Nancy Brigstocke (Lesley



▲
Blanchett
and Cohen:
a comfortable
life, upended

Manville) had given her son a camera before his trip. After his death, she developed his last roll of film, filled with steamy-arty shots of a lithe young blonde in lingerie, a woman so intent on seducing Jonathan that it seems she'd neglected her own child. Nancy was so undone by the loss of her boy that it seemed to hasten her death from cancer—but before she died, she left a novel behind, an imagined version of her son's affair with this mystery blonde. Years after her death, her still grieving husband Stephen (Kevin Kline) finds the novel locked in a drawer and decides to publish it. The disclaimer on the novel's opening page makes his intent clear: "Any resemblance to persons living or dead is not a coincidence."

Knight's novel is lots of things at once: a thriller, a riff on the idea of the unreliable narrator, a meditation on how easy it is, with all the digital means at our disposal, to cancel a career or, worse, ruin a life, simply because we think we know all the facts. Yet in some ways, Cuarón—who also adapted the script—has taken the themes of Knight's book and intensified them. His take is elegant and suspenseful, but it's also compassionate.



Disclaimer is about, he says, the stories that we build out of our own lives, which we then present to others—to the people closest to us but also to society. “As humans, we’re trying to cope with many different things,” he says, “but mainly, probably, with an immense sense of loneliness.”

OUR FEARS AND INSECURITIES influence the way we project ourselves in the world, and that can be harmful to ourselves or to the people we love. But the danger doesn’t stop there. It extends, Cuarón says, “in a macro way, in the way societies create their own narratives to hide things of the past.” We may convince ourselves of the truth of those stories, but that doesn’t make them accurate. “The history of humanity is recorded in narratives. But those narratives can also be a very powerful weapon to manipulate, because they’re hitting into the strong, deeply held beliefs of every single person,” he says. “It’s easy to say, ‘Oh, I was manipulated.’ Yeah, why? Because you already had those beliefs, even if they were dormant.”

Multiple characters in *Disclaimer* believe what they want to believe, easier than reckoning with reality. When

Cuarón was young, he’d seen Bernard Queysanne’s 1974 *The Man Who Sleeps*, written, in the second person, by the experimental novelist Georges Perec. In structuring *Disclaimer*, Cuarón wanted to try telling the story in first-person, second-person, and third-person voices: Kline’s Stephen is the “I.” The people around Catherine—anyone who might be tempted to judge her—are the third-person observers. And Catherine’s story is told in the second person: she narrates her own arc, as if rendering judgment on her own behavior—accusing rather than defending herself, perhaps.

The use of the second person, Cuarón notes, is rare in film, and maybe not the sort of approach you could pull off with just any actor. But Blanchett, he says, was more than just the star of the series. Though he usually doesn’t write a script with an actor in mind, this time was different: “I’m writing, and I’m thinking of Cate.” He knew how fortunate he was when she said yes, and he considers her a creative partner on the project. She’d marked up her script à la Dostoyevsky’s manuscripts. “Have you seen those? How he wrote arrows moving up and down, and scratching parts out, and little things that only he understood? That was Cate’s script.” She asked questions that helped him shape the story. And she was the first person, he says, to see the initial cut. Cuarón says her feedback was invaluable. “That was Cate. Incredible! I’m so blessed and lucky.”

But then, luck comes to those who are open to it. And Cuarón’s MO is to welcome the collaborative gifts of people he trusts, like his longtime friend and creative partner Emmanuel Lubezki, who has shot most of his movies. It was Lubezki’s idea to bring

on a second cinematographer, Bruno Delbonnel, whose credits include films as varied in style as *Amélie* and *Inside Llewyn Davis*. Lubezki—Cuarón, along with just about everyone else, calls him Chivo—was the one who’d suggested changing the look of the film according to the shifting points of view: there are flashback scenes requiring a softer look, while sequences set in the present might demand higher contrast or slightly crisper images. “It was beautiful,” Cuarón says, “to see the conversations between the two of them collaborating.”

Shooting with two cinematographers took a great deal of planning and coordination. But Cuarón is most aware of the demands he made on his actors—and how ably they met them. He had initially planned to write and direct just the pilot for *Disclaimer*. But once he started writing, he didn’t want to stop, and he agreed to direct the whole series. He decided to treat the project as one long film—which meant shooting more script pages each day, resulting in a much longer schedule. (The shoot ran from February 2022 to April 2023.) “Poor guys!” Cuarón says of his actors. “They had to be stuck with a character for more than one year.” Normally, they might do two or three films in that time, but they were committed to this project, and to these challenging characters, among them Blanchett’s Catherine, who becomes a pariah in her own family; Kline’s Stephen, motivated by a mingling of grief and a need for revenge; and Manville’s Nancy, whose vision of her lost son becomes a ghost she can’t shake. These are demanding roles, further complicated by the challenges of shooting under COVID-19 restrictions.

Cuarón is proud of all his actors, and he marvels at the fact that they stuck with him. “I’m so blessed with them,” he says, and by this point in the conversation, a theme has emerged. Cuarón may be one of our most graceful, inventive filmmakers, but even beyond that, every project he touches is marked by a distinct generosity of spirit. Blessings rarely flow in just one direction, and the more goodwill you put out there, the more you get in return. □

‘As humans, we’re trying to cope with many different things, but mainly, probably, with an immense sense of loneliness.’

ALFONSO CUARÓN

PROFILE

Kate Winslet puts Lee Miller in the frame

BY ESTHER ZUCKERMAN

KATE WINSLET LOVES TABLES. SHE LOVES THEM SO MUCH that the Oscar-winning actor collects them. There is nothing fancy about these antiques, but they enchant her. “It’s the knots and the whorls, the shape and feel,” she says. “They can feel like old friends, and there is something emotionally charging about an old table that comes with a history—I find imagining what that might be enormous fun.”

This hobby has had an unexpected impact on her career choices. In 2015, Winslet’s friends, the owners of an auction house in Cornwall, came across a table from a house that belonged to Annie Penrose. She was the sister of Roland Penrose, who was married for years to Lee Miller, the renowned model turned war photographer who made haunting photos of the liberation of Paris and the concentration camps at Buchenwald and Dachau. When it arrived at Winslet’s home, she placed her hands on it and thought of all the people who had sat there. Her mind turned to Miller. And that mind, which had spent decades thinking about people’s stories and how to tell them, became fixated on one nagging question: Why had no one ever made a film about Lee Miller?

Winslet spent the next eight years willing one into existence. The result is *Lee*, out Sept. 27, which Winslet produced and stars in as its eponymous subject. *Lee* is not a cradle-to-grave biopic, but instead focuses on Miller’s work during World War II and her evolution as a war photographer, capturing some of history’s most horrifying moments. The film marks a meaningful reunion too: it’s directed by Ellen Kuras, a cinematographer Winslet first collaborated with on one of the actor’s most beloved films, 2004’s *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*.

To develop the film, Winslet worked closely with Miller’s son Antony Penrose (played onscreen by Josh O’Connor), whose biography *The Lives of Lee Miller* serves as the basis for the screenplay. Winslet attributes the long development period to her desire to get Miller’s story right, through “massive” research. She felt the presence of Miller, who died in 1977, throughout the process: “I’m telling you she was behind the scenes pulling the levers the entire damn time.”

WINSLET JOINS A ZOOM CALL in late June from a hotel room in London, filled with energy. She opens by declaring that there’s “literally not a shred of makeup on my face,” though she looks exactly like the Winslet we’ve come to know over 30 years. She speaks in exuberant, run-on paragraphs, cursing up a storm. Though her HBO miniseries *The Regime*, where she played a lisping dictator, premiered in March, she hasn’t been in front of a camera in a year. Her current gig is “fully supporting” *Lee*’s release; eventually, she’s scheduled to reunite with her *Mildred Pierce*



Winslet in *Lee*, as the eponymous photojournalist during World War II

director Todd Haynes for a limited series based on Hernan Diaz’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Trust* and star in an A24 drama series for Hulu, *The Spot*.

But you’d be forgiven for thinking Winslet is constantly working, because in general she has been since the mid-1990s. Her career was launched in large part by Peter Jackson’s *Heavenly Creatures*, followed by *Sense and Sensibility* and, of course, *Titanic*. *Lee* not only teams her with Kuras as *Eternal Sunshine* (the surrealist fable about a man who tries to erase the memory of the woman he loved) celebrates its 20th anniversary. It also allows her to explore topics that have preoccupied her in films from *Revolutionary Road* to *Ammonite*. Namely, questions of women, their ambitions, and their bodily autonomy.

“Kate is very bold and is someone who, like Lee Miller, looks at the plight of women and cares about what happens,” Kuras says. “Kate is looking behind the scenes, much like Lee Miller looked behind the scenes.”

Winslet was adamant that Miller, who began her career as a model, not



‘Kate is looking behind the scenes, much like Lee Miller looked behind the scenes.’

LEE DIRECTOR
ELLEN KURAS

be defined by the male gaze. Rather, she wanted to highlight how Miller was a pioneer in a male-dominated space, and how her work turned a lens on injustice. “People still refer to her as the former model and muse of Man Ray,” Winslet says. “That was a minute in her life. I felt very strongly that we needed to take the most important decade that, if she were alive today, would likely have been the one she felt defined her.”

Lee also marked her first time producing a narrative feature. So in addition to figuring out “how the f-ck I was going to play her,” she was also handling the “f-cking cash flow.” She lived with fellow producer Kate Solomon, who took charge when the emotional toll of playing Miller became intense: scenes in concentration camps or Hitler’s apartment, restaging Miller’s famous self-portrait, nude in the genocidal dictator’s bathtub.

Winslet is known for being forthcoming about the pressures of having a female body in Hollywood—in the past she’s discussed the fat-shaming she endured after *Titanic* launched her to stratospheric fame when she

was in her early 20s. But the way she talks about her body and uses it onscreen also signals some of the freedom in *Lee*. In one scene, Miller rests unabashedly topless with her friends, a picture of prewar bliss. Winslet says she wanted to be the “softest physical version” of herself in the film, but notes that you never see Lee naked in a sexual context. When someone on set told her to suck in her stomach and sit up straight, her reaction was “You think I’m not aware you can see that? I just went, ‘I’m all good.’”

Not that she wants you to call that “brave,” a word that irks her when applied to women who don’t wear makeup or are comfortable in their skin. “That’s not f-cking brave,” she says. “I’m not an ex-postmaster fighting for justice, I’m not in the Ukraine. I’m doing a job that matters to me.” Part of that job means breaking down the lines between cast and crew, which is how Winslet first connected with Kuras on *Eternal Sunshine*. “She knows everybody’s lines as well as her own, was accessible and kind to the crew, and these are qualities we note as crew people,” Kuras recalls.

Kuras and Winslet stayed in touch, and in *Lee*, Winslet saw an “obvious opportunity” for her friend who had spent her life, like Miller, telling stories visually. “Ellen and I, and anyone growing up in that world, it’s a pretty specific kind of gang you’re in, an exclusive club of hardcore filmmaking survivors of the fittest, you know?” Winslet says. “When you have that in your film DNA, it never leaves you.”

WHILE WINSLET HAS WORKED with female filmmakers, including Jane Campion and Nancy Meyers, many of her most famous works have been helmed by men. But she doesn’t believe a male camera sees her any differently than a female one. “I’ve always played women who, hopefully, are real women,” she says. Mostly, she’s just grateful to continue having a voice in her industry—whether she’s pulling together the money for an indie or starring in an HBO hit like *Mare of Easttown*, for which she won an Emmy.

She describes how she recently showed her 10-year-old son a picture of the small sliver of a house she grew up in. Having a mother who has always, at least to him, been an Oscar-winning movie star, he couldn’t work out what he was looking at or that six people had lived there. The anecdote conveys why she doesn’t take anything for granted. “Getting work and still being invited back to the party is the greatest privilege of my life,” she says. “And it’s not one I take lightly.” Yet levity is one of her undeniable qualities. “She’s like a kind of older sister who is looking out for me and constantly asking how I’m getting on,” says her co-star O’Connor. “She’s in touch with her inner child, and that playfulness makes it really exciting to work with her.”

Case in point: Winslet’s story of how she first became acquainted with Miller’s work. In a famous photograph, Miller’s subject bends forward, her rear end forming an almost abstract shape in the frame. Friends often sent Winslet cards with that very photograph, a wink allusion to her own body. “The number of times I’ve been sent that—specifically *that* image, assuming that my butt reminds them of that butt,” she laughs, her voice swelling in volume. “I’m very proud. I enjoy that about myself.” □

ESSAY

There can be only one Sally Rooney

BY KATE DWYER

A FEW YEARS AGO, SOMEONE POSTED a photo of a man walking through Brooklyn with a copy of *Conversations With Friends* tucked in the back of his trousers, the words SALLY ROONEY peeking out above his waistband. It was an accessory that telegraphed as much about his personal style as his choice in attire did. Less than a month earlier, the book critic Constance Grady had published an essay titled “The Cult of Sally Rooney,” deeming it “aspirational” to be a fan: “If you read Sally Rooney, the thinking seems to go, you’re smart, but you’re also fun—and you’re also cool enough to be suspicious of both ‘smart’ and ‘fun’ as general concepts.”

Thanks in part to endorsements from Taylor Swift, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Lena Dunham, Rooney, the 33-year-old Irish novelist known for her exacting, witty portraits of the romantic and sexual entanglements of Dublin millennials, broke out in 2017 with her debut novel. Her name quickly became a shorthand for a cultural sensibility—the way young people in the late 2010s sublimated their deep uncertainty into a performance of anticapitalism and avoidant attachment. *Conversations With Friends* probed the ambiguities of friendship and affairs, while Rooney’s second novel, *Normal People*, published in the U.S. in 2019, charted how social class and miscommunication derailed a romance.

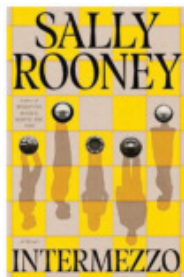
With both books, Rooney had captured a mood. She has sold millions of copies of her novels, which also include 2021’s *Beautiful World, Where Are You*, in an age when most books sell fewer than 5,000 copies. Both

Normal People and *Conversations With Friends* have been adapted into popular TV series. Ahead of her fourth novel, *Intermezzo*, out Sept. 24, 140 bookstores across the U.S. will host release parties—a treatment usually reserved for blockbuster series about wizards, fairies, and vampires.

Selling literary fiction is notoriously difficult—one publisher told *Granta* he estimates the category has only 20,000 “serious and consistent readers” in the U.S.—yet Rooney has managed to recruit fans who rarely read for pleasure. No one expected her success. *Conversations With Friends* was a sleeper hit, picking up momentum in the year after it was published almost entirely because of word-of-mouth buzz. Many have wondered: For the literary world’s sake, could the Sally Rooney effect be reproduced?

A LOT OF FANS believe Rooney’s books are in a category of their own. Mitzi Angel, the president of her U.S. publisher, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, acquired *Conversations With Friends* while in a previous role at Faber & Faber in the U.K. When she first read the manuscript in 2016, Angel felt “a jolt of recognition.” Inside the will-they-won’t-they romantic storyline between 21-year-old student Frances and 32-year-old married actor Nick were moral quandaries too. Rooney is skilled at “listening to and interpreting the culture,” Angel says. “Her work is always about the contracts between people. What is the contract between one person and another? That’s an ethical question, but it’s also a political question.”

As the former top-ranked college debater in Europe, Rooney was well positioned to speak to young people who treat the personal and political with equal degrees of importance. In an era where name recognition for debut novelists matters more than ever, her academic bona fides, agent at a major firm, and book deal with an



Rooney’s latest novel, *Intermezzo*, centers two brothers grappling with grief, lust, and love



influential editor allowed her to start her career with a degree of seriousness not often afforded to young female novelists. She was hailed as “the Salinger of the Snapchat generation,” a phrase that has followed her for years.

Once Rooney trickled through the intelligentsia, her work reached the global creative class that can anoint—and consume en masse—the next “it” thing among movies, shows, or other works of culture. This group is not necessarily made up of avid readers, but they’ve read *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* by Ottessa Moshfegh, *Detransition, Baby* by Torrey Peters, *Luster* by Raven Leilani, and, most recently, *All Fours* by Miranda July. Once this very-online cultural consumer discovered Rooney’s work, they were hooked. “She was one of the few people taken seriously for writing about relationships and sex and female anxiety, female body politics,” says literary agent Angeline Rodriguez.



“And even then, she still was kind of dismissed by more establishment people and, frankly, men. Until she became so popular that people had to pay attention.”

Rooney herself has shied away from the spotlight, emphasizing how ordinary she is during almost every (rare) interview. For many, today’s vision of success involves becoming famous; how little Rooney seems to court or embrace fame has conferred on her byline an intelligent, aloof glamour.

Rooney has been a leading voice in a literary era where desire and body politics are taken seriously, and part of her audience has embraced other works on the subject matter, from Lisa Taddeo’s 2019 best seller *Three Women* to Annie Ernaux’s chronicles of her own sexual and private life through the decades. Those writers, along with Rooney, offer a sisterly counterpart to a larger boom in contemporary romance, with hits

by authors like Emily Henry, Colleen Hoover, and Casey McQuiston dominating the best-seller lists and social media. *Normal People* is shelved under romance at Target—but it’s the only title in the aisle you’d also see tucked into the waistband of a man walking through Brooklyn.

EVER SINCE *Conversations With Friends* became a word-of-mouth hit, publishers have been trying to harness “the Sally Rooney audience” for other authors. Editors began acquiring “internal books written by dry, self-aware women” and marketing them as similar to Rooney’s. Other publishers tried, with some success, to kick-start the same buzz; *Three Women* was backed by an “antighosting” campaign where women asked the publisher to send free copies to men who “needed” to read it. In designing the brand identity for 831 Stories, a new publisher of romance novels, co-founder Claire Mazur says, “We were certainly thinking of the Sally Rooney reader, and of the lit-fic reader who we hope to pull into the [romance] genre if they weren’t there already.”

In an essay for the *New York Review of Books*, the novelist Namwali Serpell identified at least nine books published from 2020 to 2023, including *Exciting Times* by Naoise Dolan and *A Very Nice Girl* by Imogen Crimp, that felt reminiscent of Rooney’s first two novels and featured similar plots and tensions. Some of those nine books were in progress long before Rooney made her mark, responding independently to the same cultural undercurrents. Nonetheless, they were relentlessly compared, which calcified the group as “a period style,” Serpell wrote. She called them “remaster novels”—stories about young women in relationships with imbalanced power dynamics who create a double bind that tips the scales in their favor. Though some of those books were successful, none

of them touched *Conversations*.

“What’s interesting to me is how the industry for a while was chasing the next Sally Rooney, and that’s mostly subsided,” says an agent who requested anonymity for fear of retribution from her employer. “She turned out to be a robust brand but was not indicative of a new industry.” Authors like Hoover and Henry have created blocks of voracious readers with buying power in the romance space, *Twilight* sparked a wave of vampire novels, and *The Fault in Our Stars* launched “sick lit,” but Rooney’s

sales haven’t translated to other contemporary literary books in any traceable way. Where did her audience look next?

In the absence of a “next” Rooneyesque author, her readers are only that much more hungry for a next Rooney book. *Intermezzo* is hotly anticipated, both for

readers and the industry members whose livelihoods are determined by book sales. “It is rare for a book to incite as much excitement amongst booksellers as it does with the general public,” says Mikaela Dery, director of programming at the New York City bookstore chain McNally Jackson, whose *Intermezzo* launch party will include a chess workshop and a “conversations with new friends” cocktail hour.

Even if there can be only one Rooney, her success speaks to the necessity of publishers meaningfully investing in debut voices, as Angel did. In a way, Rooney and fellow zeitgeistian Moshfegh were “risky endeavors,” says agent Monika Woods, “and they paid off big because readers really loved what they wrote and what they had to say.”

So, if it’s possible for another writer to harness the energy that has followed Rooney since the beginning, odds are it will be someone whose work looks nothing like Rooney’s at all. Says Rodriguez: “The person who is actually going to inherit that—who will be ‘the next Rooney’—has to capture their own moment.”

**“The next
Rooney” has
to capture
their own
moment.”**

ANGELINE RODRIGUEZ,
LITERARY AGENT

CHINA WATCH

PRESENTED BY CHINA DAILY 中国日报



Furnishing a career steeped in heritage

Artisans who have inherited centuries of expertise refuse to let a tradition die

BY LI YINGXUE

The smooth, timeworn contours of a wooden chair seem to whisper tales from another era. Along its armrests, the elegant curves embody centuries of mastery, each line an echo of the artisans who crafted it.

However, on closer examination this seemingly ancient chair has secrets to reveal: A sleek cushion now rests against the back, its curve subtly adjusted in line with modern ergonomics. Hidden beneath each leg are small wheels, allowing this sturdy piece of craftsmanship to glide across the floor.

The chair, a product of tradition fused with innovation, was created by Liu Gengsheng, 60, a master of Beijing-style wooden furniture. The artisanship behind it has been recognized as a national-level intangible cultural heritage since 2008. It is a meticulous reproduction of a Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) relic from the Palace Museum in Beijing, adorned with traditional motifs and intricate openwork carvings.

The design adheres strictly to ancient methods — no screws, only *sunmao* (mortise-and-tenon

on) joints, with each leg carved from the same piece of wood.

Across China traditional wooden furniture has long been admired not only for its meticulous construction and visual appeal but also for the cultural stories embedded within its patterns and motifs, stories that reflect a centuries-old striving for harmony and prosperity.

Today this artisanship endures thanks to the dedicated efforts of people like Liu, but making these pieces is only the beginning. The tradition extends into restoring artifacts, reproducing antiques and contemporary design. In each of these areas artisans, restoration specialists and designers are preserving a dual heritage: the practical skills of woodworking and the deep cultural roots that ground these creations.

The result is a bridge between the past and the future, in which handcrafted furniture serves as a functional piece and a vessel of China's cultural legacy.

Liu has spent more than 40

years crafting wooden furniture. Beyond crafting he has mastered the skills of restoring antique furniture. In 1999 he established a restoration center.

"Some customers bring us nothing more than a pile of wood, barely more than kindling," he says. "We approach each piece with a genuine desire to restore it to its former glory. From a single

piece you can see the design philosophy and artisanship of the time and the continuity of Chinese culture."

In recent years Liu has been involved in numerous restoration projects for artifacts in the Palace Museum.

"Restoration is a meticulous process," he says. "Like a traditional Chinese medicine doctor, we start with observation, recording the piece's era, techniques, materials and even the meaning behind its patterns."

"You can't just disassemble a piece of history casually. Each component must be meticulously labeled, disassembled according to the precise

mortise-and-tenon technique, and then reassembled once the restoration process is finished."

Traditional Chinese wooden furniture comes in three main styles: Beijing, Canton (today known as Guangzhou, in Guangdong province) and Suzhou, in Jiangsu province.

Ou Shengchun, 65, who has designed and created classical wooden furniture for over 40 years, says: "Canton-style blends Chinese and Western influences, presenting a diverse and inclusive range of designs. Suzhou-style is known for its meticulous artisanship and understated elegance, and Beijing-style, originally used in imperial courts, combines the opulent material use of Canton-style with the intricate artisanship of Suzhou-style, emphasizing the ceremonial aspects of furniture."

Ou curates a collection of classical Chinese furniture from both domestic and international sources. Since 2018 he has been preparing to open an exhibition hall in Zhongshan, Guangdong, bringing together antique furniture pieces and related materials from around the world. In May the exhibition hall opened to the public, with admission free. Exhibits on display present the history of traditional



From left: Wooden furniture making involves designing, cutting and carving. Liu Gengsheng, a master of Beijing-style wooden furniture. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Classical wooden furniture made by Liu Gengsheng and Ou Shengchun.



Chinese furniture and the craft and culture of traditional woodworking. In his pursuit of reinventing traditional wooden pieces he upholds a principle of "90% tradition, 10% innovation," focusing on refining even the minutest details.

Xu Jianping, a lifelong enthusiast of traditional Chinese painting, excels in designing Ming-style furniture, which originated from Suzhou during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and is known for its clean and simple designs. Even in the digital age, the solid foundation of Xu, 70, in meticulous painting remains evident.



Over the years he has completed major restoration projects, including the Humble Administrator's Garden and the Master of Nets Garden in Suzhou, as well as the former residence of Hu Xueyan (1823-85), a prominent businessman and official in the Qing Dynasty, in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province.



In 1970 he began delving into the realms of Chinese flower-and-bird painting and Suzhou embroidery design. By 1973 he had immersed himself in the craft in a rosewood carving factory in Suzhou, dedicating a year to mastering woodworking and another year to honing his carving skills. Xu later switched to a design studio, marking the inception of his career in classical Chinese furniture design, a field he passionately pursues to this day.

To better preserve the artisanship of wooden furniture, traditional designs need to be integrated into modern daily life, aligning with contemporary habits while remaining affordable, he says.



Above: Traditional woodworking is widely applied in furniture making, such as screens, chairs and wardrobes. Above left: Woodworking in a window.

Dedication of patrollers moves filmmakers

BY YAN DONGJIE
and PALDEN NYIMA

July is not only one of the busiest times of year for wildlife rangers on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, but also a time of great care and responsibility. Here, rangers and researchers at the Xizang Changtang National Nature Reserve, at an altitude of 16,400 feet above sea level, observe and monitor the mass migration of the Tibetan antelope.

About 150,000 of the animals, also known as chiru, live high up on the plateau and migrate from Qinghai province to the Changtang reserve to give birth.

The species used to be listed as endangered due in part to their being hunted for their fur, but years of conservation work has lifted their number, and they are now classified as near threatened by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

This year the wildlife rangers have been joined by a team of photographers and filmmakers to document the migration, typically ranging up to several hundred miles, across what is known by many as the "roof of the world".

Starting from a patrol station in Rungma township, the documentary filmmaker Zhang Lina and two photographers ride by motorcycle across hills and streams for three hours to catch up with the migrating herds.

"Although the flow of the rivers along the way is not particularly strong, the river channels are deep and long," Zhang said. "Adult antelope can leap over easily, but the young are at high risk of being swept away by the currents and drowning. The rangers wait downstream to try and rescue them."

Zhang's aim on her filming trip is to learn and better understand the stories of these rangers and the role they play in

protecting Tibetan antelope.

Zhang and her team are passionate about nature, and often stake out areas to capture the behavior of wild animals as well as local flora. During their five-day journey across the plateau, they were able to help the rangers rescue 43 antelope.

There are more than 100 patrol stations in the Changtang National Nature Reserve, where thousands of wildlife workers patrol by motorcycle, with the task of protecting nature, preventing poaching and documenting biodiversity.

"Front-line rangers work year-round in the cold and high-altitude protected areas, carrying out patrols and rescue missions," Zhang said. "They are intimate partners of wildlife, as well as our good companions and guides."

A year ago Zhang and co-founder Yang Xu set up Friends of the Himalayan Wilderness, a group that documents the stories of wildlife rangers.

Through their pictures the lives of rangers and their heart-pounding experiences in nature are being better understood. Such experiences include rescuing snow leopards, discovering rare animals, sharing local folklore about deer and reminiscing about legends their grandmothers recounted.

Since last year Zhang and her team have provided free photography training for wildlife rangers, hoping that by empowering those closest to nature to capture more precious moments they can improve their skills and increase their income.

"Many rangers hadn't a clue when we first gave them these cameras, but now they can proficiently capture the animals they encounter on patrol," Zhang said. "We also teach them how to publish their work on resource websites, where users pay to download it."



A wildlife ranger pets an injured female Tibetan antelope in Changtang National Nature Reserve in the Xizang autonomous region in June.

TENZIN / XINHUA

Dana White The Ultimate Fighting Championship CEO on manhood, his friendship with Donald Trump, and the future of the fight business

Why do you think Donald Trump asked you, and not a family member, to introduce him at July's Republican National Convention?

Listen, he and I are really, really good friends. What I think, and from what his kids have told me, I am the one guy he connects with. They call it "bro-out"—we bro-out together.

Coming out of the conventions, there's been a fair bit of commentary about masculinity. The RNC featured Hulk Hogan; DNC highlighted Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff's self-effacing humor. It's been labeled "toxic" vs. "tonic" masculinity. Has our politics offered competing visions of what it means to be a man? It's a great question. This friend of mine was telling me, she's got a girlfriend who was saying, "You know what, I'm way more attracted to Trump's supporters. I like real men." It's funny, it's fascinating, and interesting that there is so much emphasis on, What is a real man? I don't really know what to make of it.

Well, what, in your mind, does it mean to be a man? That I can answer. You lead by example. Do you really care about your employees? I would say most don't. I definitely care. We fought through COVID. We didn't lay off one employee. As a man, there's all this talk about men's mental health—I can't stand that sh-t. It's a nasty, ugly world out there. As a man, you suck that sh-t up. It's a fact, women are smarter than men, women mature earlier than men, lots of other things. But this is also a fact: women want to feel safe and be protected, and a lot of women do want to be taken care of. I'm the guy that, yeah, you do open the door for women. And no, you don't split the bill 50-50, ever, for any reason whatsoever.

What's the biggest leadership lesson you've learned?

I talk to people, they're like, "I want to work for myself, because I want a lot of free time." You're not the right guy if that's what you're thinking about. To do the things we're doing requires a lot of time, effort, and energy. And if you're asking your people to work that hard, you better be working that hard too.



How do you see sports consumption changing going forward, and what will the UFC do to adjust to these changes? Streaming is the future. The world continues to get smaller and smaller and smaller. When you think about the ceiling on this business, there's 8 billion people on earth. I continue to reinvest in this business and open performance institutes around the world. When you and I were growing up, your parents would put you in karate and tae kwon do. This is the new martial art for children, men, and women.

Is there a dream UFC market where you want to stage an event? Haven't done an event in Africa yet. We have a champion now, world champion from South Africa, who just defended his title for the first time—Dricus du Plessis. South Africa would be first. And then we'll hit Nigeria, or one of those places after that. We'd see a fight in Africa in '25.

Power Slap, your slap-fighting promotion, will make its international debut in Abu Dhabi on Oct. 24.

What's your response to critics who say it's unsafe? These guys go through all the same medical testing that professional fighters do. We spend the money. I used to box when I was younger. I did one of those brain studies. I have black spots all over my brain. I wouldn't take one punch back because I loved it that much. The doctors all talk about, "Somebody could die." I got news for all the doctors. We're all gonna die. How do you want to live your life?

What podcasts do you listen to?

I don't listen to podcasts. I've done a million podcasts. I've never listened to a podcast in my life. I cannot be motivated by listening to somebody talk during a workout. I'm motivated by music. —SEAN GREGORY



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